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The
BALANCE
FRANCIS R. BELLAMY

THE WILLIAM ARMFIELD HOLT ❖



AND ETHEL RHODES HOLT FUND

❖ The Hols on February 22, 1903 ❖

The first marriage in Memorial Church



THE BALANCE





*"There were times . . . when he sat
gazing at his dark tenement landscape in a
despondency that Ricorton thought would never
lift"*

THE BALANCE

A Novel

BY
FRANCIS R. BELLAMY



Illustrated by Arthur Little

GARDEN CITY NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY, PAGE & COMPANY
1917

PS3503
E443. B3

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TO MY WIFE

**WITHOUT WHOM SAMMY WOULD NEVER
HAVE EXISTED**



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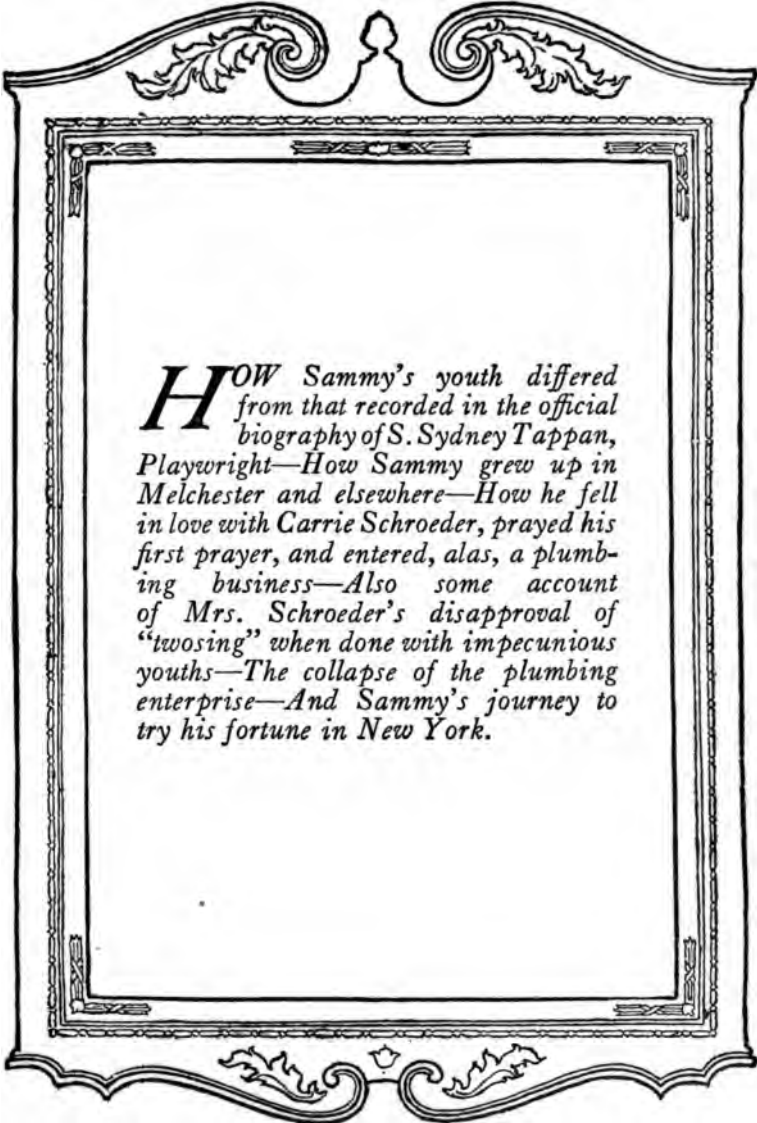
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HOW Sammy's youth differed from that recorded in the official biography of S. Sydney Tappan, Playwright—How Sammy grew up in Melchester and elsewhere—How he fell in love with Carrie Schroeder, prayed his first prayer, and entered, alas, a plumbing business—Also some account of Mrs. Schroeder's disapproval of "twosing" when done with impecunious youths—The collapse of the plumbing enterprise—And Sammy's journey to try his fortune in New York.



THE BALANCE

CHAPTER I

IN WHICH, FOR THE FIRST TIME, SAMMY'S LEGS ARE THIN TO CARRIE

"No one who met S. Sydney Tappan ever failed to be impressed at once by his compelling personality. He conquered always, like Cæsar, upon sight."

— *From the biography of S. Sydney Tappan, Playwright.*

WELL, it is a hard thing to contradict a biography and a thankless one, too, perhaps; but first impressions are apt to be varied. Is it fair, at this late day, to record the first impression a certain young lady had of S. Sydney Tappan?

It was:

"How thin his legs are!" And her eyes filled with tears for the boy whose legs were so thin that the mortification must be exquisite.

"I don't think they're so thin!" she cried out impulsively, and her hand flew to her throat with the intense pity she felt.

"They could only get hockey sticks in my stockings last Christmas," he said, with a grin on his face and a well of gratitude in his heart. Exaggeration was always his mask for emotion and the girl before him had touched his heart.

But her dark eyebrows curved until they almost met, and she clenched her hands in compassion. She thought that he meant it.

"Oh, the meanies!" she cried. "Oh, I don't think

that was nice!" And her hand crept to her throat again.

Sammy never saw Carrie's hand fly to her throat afterward without looking instinctively to see if his trousers had shrunk to the knee. It is the reason for all those finely proportioned heroes in the plays of S. Sydney Tappan. None of his leading ladies should ever be caught with her hand at her throat and her eyes on her lover's legs!

And yet it is not because I have anything against S. Sydney Tappan that I have begun this history; this is to be no attempt to tear down a popular idol. My only reason for writing the truth now, indeed, is because the real story of his struggle is so much finer than the commonplace periods of his official biography that I have not been able to restrain myself from crying out to the world: "Not so it was—but thus!" That is the reason for these pages.

If you think sometimes that I am hard upon Sammy remember that I could never be downright unfair to him. I should have Carrie's picture crying out at me then:

"Oh, please, please! Whatever he did, it was always his best!" No—the only thing I will ever be hard on in this history will be that biography—and that only because the truth about Sammy was always hard enough to discover without the handicap which the biographers have added. This time we shall have the thing as it was, without the claptrap, and without the glory.

You who met Sammy may perhaps have noticed a slight look of patience around his mouth. It redeemed what otherwise might have been justly called a rather weak chin. When it was there he was thinking of Carrie. I am glad for her that it was nearly always there. Once he did not see her for two years, but his picture came out in the dramatic section of one of our leading magazines just after one of Sylvia Tremaine, and Carrie wept for pure happiness when she saw it.

The look was there and she knew that his eyes were asking for her.

"Sammy!" she cried—and she kissed the tinted paper passionately.

There was no picture of Sammy in her settlement room; but no one could object to one of our most conscientious magazines. She bought twelve. The publishers never sent S. Sydney Tappan any commission, but he brought them a lifelong subscriber.

She could never see those magazines afterward without glimpsing again the fading vision of her youth in elm-shaded Melchester—the rustle of branches in Hawthorne Street, the smell of burning leaves on Washington Avenue, the clanging bell of the ancient horsecars as they took their leisurely way down to Main Street—the Melchester she and Sammy had known as children.

The pulse of progress had not quickened then. There were no fine marble buildings on Main Street; no settlement houses on Hague; Washington Avenue descended ignominiously to a country road running through nursery fields, over which one could see in the distance hills and woods, and long, covered bridges spanning the turbid river. The Country Club had just been formed miles out in the rural district; feed stores under flat tin roofs were still in evidence upon Main Street; Prince's Garden—early home of the drama—had not yet sold its arched entrance to the First City Bank, so the Washington Theatre was still to be built. Long, high windows with white signs on the glass stared down from the brick Preston Block upon the cobbled thoroughfare of Washington Corners; even the carved stone of the Stark Building, fireproof, was just being lifted laboriously into place, while from all directions, in place of black poles of iron, rows of shady elms marched upon the merchandise-lined sidewalks of the small business section with its high, narrow store fronts, hitching posts, and horse troughs.

Nowhere in sight, in those days of the eighties, was there any hint of the magic with which the years to

come would gild Melchester, until the great city of to-day would come to pass—the city of mighty industries and factories, of great stores and fine streets, and, alas! of dingy tenements and slums. Nowhere any sign then of the coming age of industrialism which would supersede those small shopkeepers, those cobblers, those scattered, unorganized remnants of an older era of production and distribution—supersede and crush, leaving behind the inevitable displacement of society in the form of ruined hopes, failing families, and—out Washington Avenue—new homes and fine houses, symbols of a newer success.

The first families were living across the river in the old Second Ward then; their iron fences and metal animals discouraging the invitation of their green lawns. Few indeed had been bold enough to cross the river and build their houses upon Washington Avenue and its side streets. Only as far as Hawthorne Street did any one with social position dare to live. Beyond was the land of the benighted.

Nowhere was there any hint of the coming tide of prosperity which would crowd those fields with trees and fine houses, with churches and tailored humanity, until the Four Hundred would add and subtract and multiply and divide, and, in despair, finally separate into all the many groups of a large city. Only rows of unassuming houses amid sunny lawns and graceful elms, with here and there a barn—thinning gradually into the open fields, and at last the green countryside; nowhere a sign of change, of the future.

It was in one of those unassuming houses that our Sammy was born and grew up. You have all read of his boyhood there: of the endless campaigns of lead soldiers which he conducted high in the attic; of the Brownie Republic and its newspaper, laboriously written and pasted together, one issue a week; of the plays that he staged through the proscenium arch of the large velvet picture frame he found under the eaves, plays lighted by candles, written and acted by the

Scotch Brownie, inspired by the brain of S. Sydney Tappan; of his views on Paris, too—at the age of eight—expressed by that remark in the widely reprinted letter to his nurse home in Melchester: “We dont go in at the back door, here in Paris, because the arent no backdoor to go in at!” showing clearly some Dutch or German ancestry somewhere in the past! You have read all these things even if you have forgotten them. The magazines have told them all.

The biography itself, also, has told you of his social position, springing—as I fear they have forgotten to mention—from the fact that his grandfather had known the founder of one of those leading Second Ward families since the halcyon days when the founder ran a canal boat. It has told you, too, of Annie, his Irish nurse, and the love that became his on the day her policeman died and the child stole into her empty heart; of Marian Tappan, his mother, and her unavailing efforts to make a widow’s life insurance still play the part of an income after the death of her father-in-law, when the European trips had ceased and genteel poverty come to stay. The old gentleman had been improvident.

It is only necessary indeed to read that curious volume of S. Sydney Tappan’s earlier and unrepresented plays to see this part of Sammy’s boyhood sticking out. The curtain almost invariably descends upon an humbled and repentant father, while the hero—with well-built legs—stands nobly by. It is because, to use his own remark to horrified spinsters, Sammy never had a father. John Tappan died when Sammy was but three years old. It was later, when Sammy found that other boys had fathers while he had none, and that people somehow rather pitied his mother on account of it—it was then that his pride in his family led him to assert that his mother, for her part, had never cared to get him one. No one could have been more intolerant of fathers than S. Sydney Tappan, aged six.

The child of Hawthorne Street, however, would never have recognized those clear-cut actions and motives

which pass for a description of his youth in the biography. To him the characters of his boyhood were always like people who moved in a fog. He never knew where they were going or why. In his mind in after years the first sixteen years of his life appeared as a shadowy cinema drama, punctuated by occasional clear pictures: now of himself in Melchester, watching Asa Dobbs upon a new velocipede, pedalling swiftly down the elm-shadowed length of Hawthorne Street; now packing in the heat of July or the frost of February for trips to far-off Bermuda or California or distant Vienna and Paris; now snowballing tiny Dorothy Alden and Carolyn Schroeder bright January noons after school had let out; now singing, hopelessly, in minstrel shows in Asa's attic to a suspiciously appreciative audience; now paying long visits with his mother and the Dobbs to London and Paris through changing seasons.

It was odd that long after Melchester became a blur he could remember those months in Paris, the city of charm indescribable. An embryo Wagner he was then to the kaleidoscopic fancy of his mother; spending long hours practising rebelliously over the battered grand piano while outside the gardens of Auteuil called to him. There is, indeed, a third of a grand opera score to be found now that bears in scrawling hand the signature of S. Sydney Tappan. It is the sum total of his musical genius.

He could always remember, too, with uncanny distinctness, those hours he spent with Asa upon the plain wooden floor of that Parisian apartment, leading the armies of the First Napoleon across the level fields of France. Murat! Beloved Lannes! Brave Ney! What mattered it that those legions were of lead, that the fields of France stretched a bare ten feet, and the Alps were sketched in chalk upon the wooden floor?

Sometimes, even now, on blowy winter evenings, when S. Sydney Tappan sits playing chess beside the applewood fire in Melchester, the chessboard fades as if by magic, and once more there stretch before him the sunlit

fields of France, with the Guard charging as of old before the stern eyes of their Emperor, as he sits astride his white charger saying to Marshal Tappan——

“Check!” a cool voice speaks.

And S. Sydney Tappan, in Melchester once more, plays his move at chess. It is the closest even a playwright of fifty can come to the romance of childhood's brave campaigns. His imagination can give his character a tussle even yet.

How strangely silent the biography is upon the youthful character of Sammy! That character of many starts, many impulses, and no finishes, no ends, without an understanding of which his career is unintelligible. It seemed afterward almost as if the Gods of Irony directed the fond imagination of his mother in her attempts to bring him up. A budding genius our Sammy, to Mrs. Tappan—but alas! in every way except the real one. An embryo Wagner in Paris; in London a Whistler; in Vienna a De Reszke; in California a Stevenson; in Melchester a St. Gaudens—what a magnificent educational chaos that bringing-up resulted in! Everything but what he was. It did not seem to occur to her, in spite of the Brownie Theatre, that he might be a playwright—perhaps because Melchester society did not look then with its present favour on the people of the theatre. That he could follow so faithfully all the artistic changes of program which she made during those years was due to that profound imaginative ability of his—he was always a sort of dramatic chameleon incarnated by some strange alchemy and at the beck and call of his environment. His life would be incomprehensible without this fact.

Poverty, too, did not overtake him until his boyhood was past. It explains why his education was so finely adapted to the part he finally played; and his tastes, alas! so ill fitted to those surroundings against which he was soon forced to struggle.

His boyhood has passed completely away now. You have probably often passed through Melchester on the

fast train and seen the very fields and woods where he played. They are gone to-day. The ball grounds first drove them out and houses in turn have dispossessed the ball grounds. The fields are cut up with fine streets and beautiful residences, mostly mortgaged to Mr. Schroeder.

Those Schroeders! How curiously uncommunicative the biography is upon the subject of Carrie and that family of hers! Hard facts, of course, are not the stuff of which existence is made: it is ideas that make a man and his life—but the biography does not even seem to have all the facts. The first great reality of S. Sydney Tappan's youth, for instance, is not even mentioned. It was his meeting with Carrie again, when he came home to Melchester from that last trip to England and France. He was sixteen then.

It was at their first party that fall that the meeting took place; and as they came home after it that Sammy first showed the changeability of those chameleon spots of his. It was by the little dark hedge on Hawthorne Street, it is gray with age now, that he took the hand she swung so lightly by her side.

"Carrie!" he said, his boyish voice husky with emotion. He did not really know what he was going to say, beyond that the situation demanded something romantic, until after he had started and there was no retreat.

But he got no chance to say it then. Carrie Schroeder never deceived herself though there were many times when she wished passionately she could.

"Please don't!" she answered. It was instinctive, her drawing back. That Sammy himself might not be entirely in earnest did not occur to her.

But it was Sammy's first chance at a dramatic scene, and he fell in love with it on the spot. What more dramatically appealing, indeed, than a rejected lover? It was his first embrace with his heroi-comic Imp.

"Is there no chance for me?" he asked brokenly. He meant it, perhaps, divided by twenty-four.

Things were always very real to Carrie, however.

"Oh, Sam!" she said, almost in a whisper, as her hand flew to her throat. "I just wish I could!" And she kissed him impulsively and ran into the house closing the door after her.

It was only then that Sammy realized how much he should have been in earnest. It was like a shock of cold water. He only prayed twice in his life for anything. This was the first time. He looked up at the light as it flashed out from Carrie's window.

"God!" he said in a whisper, "God! Please let me love Carrie—and please make Carrie love me—all of our lives."

He always meant well, did Sammy. If it was merely another colour flashing from the spectrum of his character, he was properly punished. God never forgot.

"Why, how ideal!" I can almost hear you saying. "The boyhood, the very romance S. Sydney Tappan should have had! The very surroundings for his genius! Paris, Vienna, London, Hawthorne Street, this is the kind of palette he should have had from which to paint those glowing scenes of his later career."

Alas! This is not the biography. This time we deal with the truth. Glowing scenes call for dark and boldly lined figures in relief. We approach the shadows on the canvas.

CHAPTER II

IN WHICH SAMMY WRITES SOME LETTERS, BUT UNFORTUNATELY NEGLECTS TO ADHERE TO THE TRUTH

A FAMILY supremely unconscious of the impending fame of S. Sydney Tappan, that Schroeder family, then. Even the dragon of the family, Mrs. Schroeder, seemed quite unaware of his existence, until the duties of her position called her to witness that he was writing to her eldest daughter from college. She did not seem unduly excited then.

"Who is this from?" she inquired, in a tone which implied unspeakable distrust for the author of the letter which she held up before her daughter's gaze. She seemed to disregard the opened envelope completely. The humblest correspondent with a Schroeder daughter, indeed, could always be sure of two readers, at least: Mrs. Schroeder first—and then the daughter.

"Sam Tappan," Carrie replied in her low, musical voice. She was the only one of the three daughters who did not seem completely effaced by the mere presence of her mother.

Mrs. Schroeder sniffed audibly while her husband buried himself deeper in his newspaper. She had come upon some particularly fine flourish of that dramatic mind, I suppose.

"Well, he's a fool!" she said angrily. "You needn't encourage *him*!" It was her capital instinct always—to consider all people fools.

Such was our Sammy's first introduction to that family.

Alas! for the Schroeders! To be thus flung into place as mere scenery before which to enact again the drama

of S. Sydney Tappan's life! Does no one remember now Charles W. Schroeder, or the great Schroeder grocery stores for themselves? Is all the vast Schroeder achievement lost sight of in the blaze of our Sammy's name?

It was not so once upon a time. There was a day, indeed, when most of Melchester, society and all, lay prostrate beneath the spell of that success, before S. Sydney Tappan had even been heard of. It was when the Schroeder stores were merged with a vast chain of others, leaving only the large yellow brick building on South Avenue to bear the Schroeder name—and Mr. Schroeder himself became the mainstay and a partner in Hopkinson, Balmer & Lawrence, the big department store of which the city has always been so proud.

A hard-working corner grocer in the beginning, too, this same Schroeder, and not in the society column at all, Melchester said with bated breath, lest pride be meanly construed as spite. That the nucleus of the first grocery had been given its owner by his brother in an illegal effort to alleviate the pain of a bankruptcy, Melchester did not hint. The store had succeeded, so there seemed little doubt that Providence considered the transaction proper. To Melchester the inference seemed fairly obvious. Who were they to cavil—well, and it had all happened a long time ago, too, before the bulk of the business was in wholesale, before the Schroeders appeared in the society columns. Who knew? There were always carpers, people critical of any success, worse themselves no doubt than the successful people they criticised. A vast achievement, that Schroeder success! Its mere size carried with it much justification.

A man of singular perspicacity, too, Mr. Schroeder, so people said, even where his wife was concerned. From the first year of their marriage there had been no doubt in his mind as to what course to pursue where she was concerned. At the first sign of domestic bad weather he had always merely prepared for the change. The

arrival of three daughters, one by one, followed by the usual hard problems incidental to such folk, had confirmed him in the wisdom of this choice. Upon any subject regarding them, his opinion was neither asked for nor required. It was assumed by his wife that he had none. By such a simple device had he secured the control of all his time in order to devote it to his business.

He went to the yellow brick building on South Avenue every morning at eight; and except for his visit to Hopkinson, Balmer & Lawrence, lasting from ten until twelve, he did not emerge until half after five. Gossip had it that the reason he did not lunch at the store was because his noon meal in the brick building consisted of items which, unless eaten, might prove a total loss to the grocery company. This no doubt is a libel. At five-thirty he came out, putting on his coat, and stepped into the Schroeder carriage unless the engagements of the family—which had a sort of holy precedence—had preëmpted it; in which case he purchased a paper from the boy on the corner, being careful to receive the correct number of pennies in change, and walked slowly home.

He arrived as a rule at six. By imperceptible manœuvres the dinner hour in his household had been deferred, by degrees, until now he dined at seven; and it was during this intervening hour that he read the *Democrat Herald* from front page to last. He particularly liked the editorials. If you are one of those unfortunate people who are acquainted with the *Democrat Herald* you will understand from this, without further explanation, the exact mental equipment of Mr. Schroeder. He was one of the most magnificently solid of Melchester's solid business men.

Such was that Schroeder family then.

Nothing could have been farther from Sammy's thoughts than the Schroeders, however, the March afternoon he alighted in the smoke-blackened train shed which in those days proclaimed to the traveller his

arrival in Melchester. There was only one thought, one question in the future playwright's mind then. It was whether his mother was still alive in the house on Hawthorne Street. And if by any chance she could know yet of the failure in English which had dropped him from college this week of her illness.

He had not thought of much else, this tall, rather handsome youth, since the stone station in the Berkshires faded from sight, some hours ago, in the sparkling blue white of winter, and he turned a little blindly into the warm comfort of the parlour car, leaving a college career behind him forever.

Well, he does not deserve a college career, he has told himself grimly all day. Somehow he has not been able to escape a burning sense of his unworthiness ever since the letter came from Annie, his old nurse, telling him of his mother's illness. Breakdown it is, in reality, he knows. Breakdown from the worry of trying to live and support a son in college, also, on an income insufficient for either. A son, too, who has known for many long weeks that only a miracle can keep him still in college once the mid-year examinations are past; and who has worried only lest his mother find it out before the last moment possible.

That has been the reason for those letters of his, he has assured himself all day. Why should she suffer before it is absolutely necessary? The letters must have pleased her for the moment. It has been really kindness, at bottom.

It is odd, however, how certain lines and phrases in them have been slinking across his vision. Phrases which, somehow, he has not been able to banish from his mind. There has seemed something cheap about those letters this afternoon, something crude and tawdry, like old scenery blinking garishly in daylight, its poor effort shamed by nature's reality. Reality! Is that it? Well, they have not been quite the truth, of course.

The ones on the dramatic club, for instance, and his

lofty duty to the Fine Arts in the college! On his character—God save the mark—and its improvement! On his efforts for the class football team, the debating club, for what not, because mere trying means so much to the soul! His self-sacrifices for the good of the majority, the university——

The weight of them has pressed heavily upon his conscience. They are but lies, that clear, cold light tells him mercilessly. There is no mention in them of North Adams with its bars and cheap theatres, he remembers uncomfortably, of Troy and its new hotel, of Albany and its near metropolitan attractions; of any of those devilish week-ends he has spent there proving himself a man in the time-honoured custom of young men since the world began; no mention in them, in a word, of that real, actual life of his of which classrooms and Williamstown have been but the necessary evils, only endured that the joys of existence might be tasted elsewhere.

Letters a son at college should write to a widowed mother at home! That is what they are—not S. Sydney Tappan's letters to the failing woman on Hawthorne Street. They are the record of his first heroic rôle, that is all.

Poor Sammy! He was not well acquainted with that Imp of his in those days. I am sure, as he drove to Hawthorne Street, that he thought he was conscious of nothing except the picture of his mother, pale, drawn with worry, struggling to fit him for the place tradition had mapped out for him when Melchester was young and the Tappan name a sesame. And yet his heroic Imp was with him even then, catching on behind the carriage as it rolled away from the ugly brick station and whispering through the little back window:

"It's you whom she may leave alone, Sydney! A fine part if you play it correctly!"

The rest of the ride was so filled with the idea, splendidly worked out, that his eyes were even swimming a little with tears as he dismissed the carriage and

walked up the steps with a self-command worthy of his grandfather himself. He was thinking what an object of sympathy he might easily be, and playing the hero bearing bravely up beneath the weight of sorrow!

It was Annie's first words which told him that what he had been merely imagining had become the truth.

"You poor boy," she said, weeping, as she drew him in. "She has left us!"

He hardly grasped then what she meant until he went upstairs to the big front room that had been playroom, nursery, and bedroom to his youth, and saw the face of his mother, the strain gone out of it, and the quiet of peace everlasting upon it. It was a moment then for that dramatic devil, but somehow the devil was strangely absent. Only the stunned soul of Sammy was left in the room. She was dead. . . .

Death to youth, however, is not a happening, it is a slow, grim realization that the loved one has gone. The realization for Sammy was spread out over all of his life.

All that he could remember of those days, afterward, was the hush of the house; the faces of the relatives as they talked with him in just the right key for use with a cousin so recently orphaned; the silent meals at the Dobbs' next door, broken only by the loud nose-blowing of the great uncle from Washington; the embarrassed sympathy of Carrie as she asked if there were not something she could do; the frightened way Dorothy Alden from across the street talked to him in the hall; the inexorable preparations for the funeral; and the misty rain as his carriage drove to the cemetery behind the hearse; and then—the quiet of the house.

It seemed odd, that quiet, broken only by the sound of Annie upstairs as she ransacked some old bureau drawers. It brought home to the boy a sense of his loneliness; a loneliness intensified by the dawning comprehension that this house, with all its associations, must be left behind now—even the old cat, as well as Annie, left to seek a new place for herself. He would

have only a little money, perhaps ten thousand dollars. The great uncle from Washington had said so. There might be enough income to enable him to board some place while he took up the law, the old gentleman had said, blowing his nose. That would be all. His mother had lived on her capital. He could not do that, too.

He realized a little then his vast ignorance of the life to which he had returned so suddenly, and yet which he had never really known. The horizon of youth is small. He would work, of course, though at just what he did not know. He had friends. In time it would be all right. His ability must be of a high order. Poor Sammy! That was the extent of his outlook.

It was not a good afternoon for Fate to have started her work upon his character. But Fate is not tender hearted. She was coming even then with Annie as the Irish girl came in to light the lamps and pull the shades on the dusk of the March afternoon.

"It's a package she left for you," Annie said as she gave him a little bundle by the lamp. "A week now," she added, "I was meaning to send it on to you at the college."

He looks near like a man, she thinks to herself as she goes out to the kitchen—a man! And she wheeled him herself on that sidewalk outside. . . .

In the old-fashioned drawing-room, however, our Sammy is gazing curiously at a package he is unwrapping. Yes, he is almost a man except for that weak look around his mouth. He seems quite immature when his chin is plain in the light from the lamp.

Letters, he sees, as he unwraps the bundle completely—some one's letters, and a book. It is not until the light falls on the writing, however, that he sees they are his own letters from college! His letters, all carefully arranged in the order of their date. His letters upon his college activities, upon his obligations, upon his duties, his sacrifices—his letters on everything, perhaps, except the truth.

It is with an odd feeling of chill, of cold, that he reads the note with them in that familiar, fine handwriting of his mother's.

Emerson! He is like Emerson, she has written, may yet be another such philosopher in time. Yes, that is the book, too—"Emerson on Character," it says on the cover. On the flyleaf is written: "To my son Sammy, on the eighteenth anniversary of his father's death, with the hope that he, too, is proud of his son!"

I wonder if he felt, just a trifle, the tragedy of his mother's life in that simple line upon the flyleaf? It was his first awakening.

Let us leave him to gaze on the face of his conscience there in the drawing-room by the fire while we tiptoe out and are gone. And yet I cannot resist a quotation from the biography as we close the door behind us. It will tell you, perhaps, why I find it hard to be fair.

"Faithful to those high ideals which he formed so early in life S. Sydney Tappan upon his mother's death resolved to deny himself all thought of a college career and set about the serious business of life at once."

Ah, those early high ideals!

I doubt if they ever existed except in the pages of the biography. They are pure high imagination, I suspect! It is the reason why publishers' entreaties to put out those letters nowadays as a single volume for young men are always met by S. Sydney Tappan with such an ungracious refusal. He does not care to be reminded of the youth who penned them. They are the only part of that biography which he has never read. When he comes to the letters, he skips them.

CHAPTER III

IN WHICH SAMMY FINALLY LOSES MRS. SCHROEDER'S FAVOUR BUT GAINS HER DAUGHTER'S

MELCHESTER, in those days, was growing beyond the expectations of her most optimistic citizens. A vacant lot here received a house, an old dwelling there made way for a new brick block; high rents attracted the Boston flat builder; new streets were laid out with little noise, and a mile away no comment; new pavements gave opportunity for old couples to sell dingy gray houses and move farther out to hardwood floors, to view in surprise, a little later, the apartment house where once their home had stood; buildings with store fronts outraged the sedate old houses beneath the elms until slowly they lost courage and became boarding places for clerks from the outreaching business section.

Slowly the downtown stores crept away from Main Street and soon people transferred from car to car to reach their different shopping destinations. The Corners became dingy, and at night nearly deserted; while on a half-dozen thoroughfares the glory that once was theirs blazed forth in electric lights and plate-glass display windows into which the theatre crowds stared with awe and longing as they waited for their home-bound cars—cars no longer small and lined with long, longitudinal seats, but splendid, bright, and big, with electric signs and demands to have your fare ready before boarding in the rear.

New fortunes rose to formidable dimensions, from factories whose goods, spread far and wide over the land even to the Pacific Coast, lent lustre and a name to the city which was just conscious of their presence.

Unfamiliar names appeared on the signs "For Sale." The strange metal animals and gods and goddesses of the front lawns of the old aristocracy disappeared before the onslaught of the landscape architect and a newer taste. Fine automobiles went speeding far out Washington Avenue, and turned in at big new houses of mushroom growth. At night the boxes at the theatres gleamed with new and finer jewels. New figures rose and spoke at Chamber of Commerce dinners while Mr. Schroeder wondered when they had come to town. New names were posted on the bulletin boards at the clubs. Even the Schroeder grocery stores were forgotten, their name still known only in the world of real estate when men asked each other where Charles W. Schroeder got the money to buy this lot or that block. To cap all Mrs. Schroeder was heard one day referring to the *nouveau riche*!

Progress could do no more. Melchester had become a city while her citizens gossiped.

Sammy hardly realized it, he was so busy enjoying himself.

Evenings at the Country Club or at dances, afternoons of bowling or tennis, all the gay parties which made up the life of Melchester's younger society set before the town became a great city filled the greater part of his time then. Afterward those years always seemed to him like an indistinct memory from some other existence, the people he knew then mere phantoms of a youthful dream, his love affair with Carrie the only thing projected from the world of his actual life—with his real career waiting patiently all the while for its beginning in the streets of New York.

He never knew how that affair with Carrie began again, never could put his finger upon any incident and say—here it began. He gravitated toward her naturally, the essential sympathy of their natures obscured only slightly by the thoughtlessness of youth, flaring into a conscious passion by the twin accidents of propinquity and young love.

Years later he could see the wherefore of those actions of Mrs. Schroeder's and understand the hidden causes of the youthful drama which hurled him at last into the current of raw existence. But in the days of his early twenties he did not analyze the nature of the world he set about conquering so nonchalantly. Such analysis did not seem necessary in the simple conception of success he held then. His horizon was bounded by those friends of his—friends of circumstance and environment only—who made up the small social circle his birth entitled him to in Melchester so long as his finances could keep him there. Success appeared to him as a mere continuing in the path in which a kind Providence had placed him.

It was why he ignored his failure in English and his lack of a college education and chose the law in old religious Mr. Dabney's office in the Preston Block; trying, spasmodically, to write plays in the odd moments of his profession. Those plays! Poor Carrie! He read them all to her and looked for applause. It is a matter for wonder that she did not notice that strange peculiarity which all of them had. He counted afterward, and there were sixteen plays that he started, and not one that he finished. There were no last acts. He always lost interest before they were done.

That Mrs. Schroeder did not look with favour upon the tall, slender youth who studied law so desultorily between social engagements is not surprising. It was not that she had any firmer grasp of essentials than our Sammy; it was because she saw no place for him in the growing aristocracy of wealth in Melchester—and wealth was her standard. Slowly the sesame of the Tappan name was fading even among those to whom old Mr. Tappan and Sammy's parents had been real breathing people and not names. The power of the old families was dwindling.

It was not until the New Year's dance at the Washington Club, however, that Sammy ever seriously

entered her mind. She had counted upon her first warning to keep Carrie from anything foolish before. Her suspicion took its first look around then as she sat in the little balcony and watched Carrie dancing with him rather oftener than seemed actually necessary.

It coloured that view she took of him, coloured it so that she was not conscious of his rather fine looks, his clear gray eye, his dark hair and brown face, redeemed from mere good breeding by the latent strength beginning to show around the chin. All that she saw as she gazed was a family vanished, and a fortune with them, and a young man of dreamy mind left to make his own way in the world—a young man with no longer even a home on Hawthorne Street from which to start out—his home a room on the discouraged elm-lined street where the business clerks were boarding—and Annie, his nurse, her own maid now in the house on Washington Avenue.

“What does that Tappan boy intend to be?” she asked Mrs. Halton, her next-door neighbour but one on the Avenue.

Mr. Schroeder would hardly have recognized the correct tone of his wife’s voice in the question. The club always overawed her just a trifle. In spite of Mr. Schroeder’s membership she could not always forget the time when the store—there was but one grocery then—had supplied the club with its food. Thank Heaven the steward of those days was dead and gone! It had been one of the first questions she asked when her husband brought her the news of his election; and she had not entered the hallowed precincts until the truth had been ascertained: it was another name.

“A lawyer, I believe,” returned Mrs. Halton listlessly, in response to the half-forgotten question.

Her son would have a factory for the running when he graduated from college, and she had no daughters—so was safe so far as impecunious Sammies were concerned.

“Humph!” remarked Mrs. Schroeder disdainfully.

"A scheme to have a good time and call it work, I suppose. I don't know what the world is coming to. All the men seem to be either fools or devils—though as for me, give me a devil! They've all got that in 'em! But I never could stand a fool."

Possibly twenty-five years of Mr. Schroeder had influenced her taste.

She has risen now to pay her respects to Mrs. Alden, however, and left Sammy thus flat upon his back, plainly tagged as a fool. Mrs. Alden is just a step higher in the social ladder, you see, having been once or twice to the home of the canal boat driver's descendants—so must be treated with due consideration.

But Mrs. Halton is not properly impressed.

"She wants her daughter to get some one like Fred, I suppose," she says comfortably to herself. Fred is the future factory owner, distinguished so far only for spending magnificent sums of some one else's money.

As she watches the crowd coming out from supper, however, she is forced to admit that of them all the daughter of the house of Schroeder is the most attractive. She is not exactly beautiful, she reflects—to change her opinion instantly, as Carrie stands for a moment smiling at S. Sydney Tappan, her charming figure instinct with tenderness and grace, her face saying all unconsciously in every curve of its smile, "I love you, Sammy!"

How plainly her dream glowed in her face as she stood in the ballroom, there! That dream of eternal kindness she always had—herself clad in the furs and fine raiment of the duchess alighting from her automobile to help past the dangerous crossing the poor and ill-clad old woman who stood on the corner. There, Sammy, had you but known it, glowed the inspiration which the world has called yours. Gone your farces, your dramas, your pageants, and shining through the mask of characters and words the soul of Carrie speaking kindness. Had Carrie been at that famous dinner of the English court where the New World guest aroused the

titters of the courtiers by tucking his napkin beneath his chin Queen Victoria would not have been the first to gravely follow suit with a silent rebuke for such unkind discourtesy.

Well, you never became a duchess, Carrie, and dangerous crossings have their traffic officer in Melchester now—but you changed the dream scene later anyway, so it does not matter. You could not bear those fine garments when the old woman was so poorly clad. . . .

It was in the early summer that Mrs. Schroeder allowed her suspicions to drive her into action so that she took to sitting in the library across the hall. It was not her love for books, however, that led her to select the library. Indeed by far the most of her volumes showed plainly that they had not been touched. A skilful writer indeed who could escape the displeasure of Mrs. Schroeder and not be branded as a fool before he had spoken for two chapters in self-defense! Conversations in the drawing-room could be overheard without much effort—that was the secret of the change.

Mr. Schroeder grumbled when he found his easy chair gone from the den; but his revolt was feeble, and after the first outbreak he sat sulkily through long evenings enlivened by snatches of conversation from the drawing-room. It took the flavour from the *Democrat Herald* editorials somehow and he often took refuge in sleep, but his wife could hear her daughter in the next room and was satisfied. The banisters had been undignified.

It was only when a young man came whose voice was low and infrequent that she lost patience and could with difficulty restrain herself from bursting forth and crying "louder!" through the curtains. Such young men were classed as fools after the first call, and ever after discouraged.

She never forgot that evening when S. Sydney Tappan called and she listened to him carefully for the first time.

"It will be fine to be a lawyer, Sammy," she could

hear Carrie saying in her low voice. "There are such chances, such opportunities for being some one big."

"Yes," says Sammy. "And it isn't just working for money. I don't think money means much to me."

"To me, either," responds Carrie, in a glow. "Beyond the chance it gives one of doing good."

Oh, for a photograph of Mrs. Schroeder's face!

"You see, though," Sammy goes on, "I have so little money, that's the trouble. It takes so long to become a lawyer, before you make anything, I mean."

"I know," cries Carrie, "but think of Lincoln—how he worked and worked and read by the fire and rode around on the circuit and had hardly any money—and see how much he made of himself!"

"But we can't all be Lincolns," Sammy answers. In his heart he is saying, "You modest devil!"

"No," Carrie cries, a little flushed, "but we can all try!"

In the library Mrs. Schroeder is bursting. Lincoln, indeed! The day for Lincolns has gone by.

Sammy seems a trifle despondent.

"I don't know," he says sombrely. "It means getting so far behind the other fellows—they'll all be out and married and making money before I have even started."

Carrie, however, is thrilled.

"The right girl would always wait!" she cries out. She means she herself would, of course. "And you would do something for the world in the end, while the others would never go beyond just making money."

She is a youthful altruist, not knowing that this road she is urging upon S. Sydney Tappan leads to the martyrdom of the revolutionist as well as the halo of the great man, and that no signpost marks the place where the ways divide. But he has not forgotten those letters to his mother yet—and he shrinks from climbing upon his pedestal so soon and so is silent.

"An upright lawyer is so fine," Carrie continues. "He can stand for so much in the world—and oh, I

don't know, it seems as if there were so much to be done—really fine things—like stopping all this poverty and things like that—doesn't it seem like that to you, too?"

Why, the girl is a fool! Mrs. Schroeder, in the next room, makes a grimace.

"Yes, somebody ought to write a play on poverty," Sammy replies, unconscious prophet, "and make everybody think about it!"

Shades of all the revolutionists since time began! This youth in the Schroeder parlour thinks people should have the subject of poverty called to their notice!

The irony does not strike Mrs. Schroeder, however, as she sits in the library. She mutters:

"A play indeed, the fool!"

Why, no one would go to see such a play, she thinks, provided even that any one sufficiently idiotic could be found to write it. Poverty, indeed—it is their own fault if they are poor, those wretched frequenters of saloons. Let them work and save, instead of asking people to write plays about them. Of all the fools this Tappan boy is certainly the worst. He will never make a dollar.

That Imp of Sammy's is feeling the sting of the lash, meanwhile, in the drawing-room as Carrie continues:

"I just know you could do things like that, Sammy," she cries eagerly, "because you've got the character and the ideals and the perseverance!"

Oh! That perseverance of our Sammy's! The Imp disregards all the facts for a moment.

"Yes," he replies, "that is why Gordon of Khartoum was always my hero—he stayed by his guns until the end, and died for it."

It is not until Sammy goes down the steps that his English course recurs to him; and those letters from college; and those unfinished plays! And his face shows a tiny grim look in the half light of Washington Avenue's lamps. He is catching on to himself a little more. He has no perseverance at all.

When he has gone the storm breaks upon Carrie.

"I don't want Sam Tappan coming here any more, young lady," her mother says angrily, as the front door closes. "I won't have it. It is time he was sent about his business."

Mr. Schroeder has discreetly folded up his paper and gone to lock the doors and windows. If there is to be any sending of people anywhere he will escape while there is time.

But Mrs. Schroeder's blood is up, and discretion cast to the winds.

"Do you hear?" she says angrily.

In Carrie's eye there is a tiny spark.

"Why, mother?" she asks quietly.

"Because I don't want him here, that's why enough!" says Mrs. Schroeder loudly. "The next time he comes here I'll show him the door!"

Mr. Schroeder has spent as much time at the windows and doors now as he feels is consistent with safety.

"Well, well, now," he begins, apologetically to his daughter, "there are lots of other young men."

It is an actual situation which confronts Carrie, however.

"But what shall I tell him, father?" she repeats still quietly.

"Tell him," her father repeats vaguely, "why, just don't have him come!" Confound these reasons! Families are certainly the devil! Why must they always have reasons?

"And tell him nothing?" she repeats. It is as much for her sake as for Sammy's that she wishes to know.

"Oh, tell him you don't want to see him, that's all," says Mrs. Schroeder angrily. Such talk about nothing!

"But that isn't the truth," answers Carrie. "I do want to see him."

"My Lord!" groans Mrs. Schroeder. "The truth!"

"Fred Halton now," says Mr. Schroeder clumsily, "have Fred come and call." To his mind, in a haze

regarding such affairs, this is a helpful suggestion, his lovely daughter surely being able to have whatever callers may be desired and this affair apparently being merely a matter of one caller or another.

Carrie, however, has a brief glimpse of the consolation offered as he sits during a call, snapping his fingers loudly to give an impression of masculine verve to all his remarks—remarks which are sadly in need of it, too.

"I don't want Fred Halton to call," she says in a low tone. Have her parents no feelings?

"Well," says her mother angrily, "you've seen the last of Sam Tappan, anyhow!"

"Perhaps you could tell him better when you've had some sleep," says Mr. Schroeder apologetically.

Sleep! Is this the extent of her parents' comprehension? She shook her head. To the end of her life she could never do anything of which that conscience of hers did not approve.

"I've got to tell him the truth," she said doggedly. "Don't you see that at all, mother?" She was ceasing very rapidly to be a child as she stood before her parents in the old fancy drawing-room—the marks of the soul shining dimly through the first flush of youth. Her mother recognized where the difficulty lay then.

"Well, tell him the truth, then," she said harshly. "So long as you keep him away!" She was at the end of her patience.

A half-hour later the storm had all cleared away, however, as she went humming to bed. Sam Tappan was disposed of, at least, she was thinking.

Only in Carrie's room down the hall was there a sign of the tempest. She could hear that light tune of her mother's there as she stared into her mirror, the iron of injustice burning into her soul. Her mother could even sing while she gave up Sammy! And they had not told her after all just why she must give him up!

Well, she must tell him the truth, anyway, to-morrow—that at least she has promised. As for the rest—

As she stared into her mirror a new light came into her eyes.

Would Sammy give her up so easily, too, she asked of the face in the glass? And a faint blush flooded through her cheeks and spread down her slender throat.

He had said he had perseverance!

CHAPTER IV

IN WHICH CARRIE TELLS SAMMY SOME UNPALATABLE TRUTHS WHICH DO NOT TURN OUT BADLY AT ALL

IT is less than twenty-four hours later that Sammy is calling again at the house on Washington Avenue, all unconscious of the fact that his partner for the evening has been so rudely charged with the duty of telling him such unpalatable truths.

He has been quite despondent all day in the dusty, ill-lighted office in the Preston Block, watching the slow eddies of trade which drift around Washington Corners like backwater from the swift current four blocks away. Success at the law, somehow, has lost all its attraction. It seems more like a dull and sombre path leading to a dry and dusty old age, with perhaps the price of a coffin at the end, than a heroic career. The real heroes are that brilliant crowd four blocks away, where, glimpsed through the frame of side streets, the bright stream of life roars, its colours and flags shining magnificently in the sunlight. Success! That is success out there, not here in the dusty law office with the picture of Lincoln on the wall! The Imp has been straining at the leash all day.

Mixed with his despondency, too, there has been a new, queer feeling about Carrie. Slowly there has been growing in his mind the conviction that he cannot live without her. What chance of winning her will this slow hero of the law office have against those brilliant conquerors of commerce out there? Success! A lawyer! Why, there is but one god—Mercury. He, himself, is simply falling farther and farther behind that brilliant crowd which is surging on to success so rapidly

on the routes of trade, following the prophet Gold. The Imp has decidedly sickened of the solid pathway of the law.

Mrs. Schroeder is calling down the banisters after her daughter now, however, as she goes out with Sammy to the carriage:

"Remember what I said last night! He can't come here!"

She is quite undaunted by the sight of S. Sydney Tappan's silk hat in the hall. Her daughter can go to dinner dances given by the Dobbs, but Sam Tappan shall not call. She has been in somewhat of a quandary all day, trying to decide whether the Schroeder social position will be sufficiently improved by her daughter's attendance at the dance to pay for the risk run by Carrie in meeting the Tappan boy once more. But the Dobbs' overpowering position has won the day.

In Carrie's mind, as she and Sammy drive out along the river road toward the sunset, there is an unusual little undercurrent of excitement, questioning her, thrilling her, making her heart beat and her pulses quiver just a trifle faster than usual. She has been wondering all day, since early morning, just how Sammy will take what she has to say—wondering, too, just how she will say it, and when. There have been a dozen times already when she has not been able to remember at all how she will put it to him.

It is why she sits in silence as they drive. Perhaps the thing will work itself out she thinks, the telling perhaps be easier, when darkness has come and they can walk on the Country Club lawn between dances.

Freddie Halton is snapping his fingers as their carriage draws up and they alight at the *porte-cochère*. On the railing some one in white flannels is posing—Max Stimpson, making it a point, as usual, to show himself off to the best advantage. Beyond is the crowd, that crowd of gay young people who represented life to S. Sydney Tappan then.

"Welcome to our city," says Asa Dobbs gaily, hold-

ing out his hands to the arriving couple. He has always envied his old roommate the chance he has to see Carrie and all the other girls while he himself is compelled to plug away at college.

"How is dear old North Ad?" our Sammy asks, with the devilish smile that always goes with the mention of such things at twenty-five.

"Yes," Dorothy Alden breaks in roguishly, "confess, Asa! I've been hearing the wildest tales! Wild and reckless!"

Freddie Halton snaps his fingers loudly.

"Pooh!" he says, "wild oats, Dot! They all get over it when they grow up." He has just graduated, and is about to join our Elder Statesmen if his remarks are any criterion of intention.

"And they all get over it!" sings Max Stimpson, so as to display his fine, deep tones.

"Yes," says Asa ponderously, "it doesn't last." And they file in to dinner, these youths who, to judge from their expressions, have tasted life to its dregs.

It seems incredible now to be told that after the dinner has started, and the repartee of the twenties is flying thick and fast, there rises up in Sammy a great envy of these old friends of his; and yet he never forgot the odd sensation he had that night. It was that dramatic devil pulling at his coat tails again—that was the explanation.

"The West for me this summer," Asa was saying with an air of high adventure. "Biff and I—you remember Biff, Sam—we're going to put his new car through to the coast. Montana and the Dakotas, through Bismarck and the Bad Lands, that way!"

Automobile trips are still classed as adventure.

"All mere civilization," sneers Max Stimpson. "Better come with Fred and me through the Hudson's Bay country. Just canoes and duffle bags, and a frying pan and axe!"

"You bet!" says Freddie. "That's the stuff! The wilds and backwoods for mine every time!" He is

evidently trying to give the impression of one of Sir Henry Morgan's buccaneers just off the ship for an evening in the town.

That Imp can contain himself no longer now, and S. Sydney Tappan is filled with a great longing to resume this old life, to plunge once more into this vista of modern romance and high exploit which his companions are opening so temptingly before him. Why, they will have gone everywhere and seen everything worth while in life while he sits and studies in his stuffy office or perhaps grubs for money in some business! What is success beside a career of adventure that takes a man to the ends of the earth to return him home browned and lean and tough like whipcord or fine steel, with a halo of daring deeds around his head and a bag of strange stories with which to hold the men at the club enthralled until far into the morning? He would have left for the North Pole at that moment had there been no delay in starting. Only the salad—and later, the dancing—saved him.

He watched the dancing quite despondently. An old tune had brought into his mind a long-past scene. It was of Asa on a new velocipede on Hawthorne Street with himself standing enviously pressing his nose to the glass the better to see him disappear toward Washington Avenue. Well, Asa was still riding the velocipede, it seemed, while he himself watched enviously from the background—only it was Montana and the coast now instead of the far shadows of Hawthorne Street into which the rider was about to disappear.

He turned his gaze then to watch Carrie, an odd sensation filling his heart as he looked after her while she and Freddie walked out upon the shadowy lawn. Did she care much for Halton, he wondered? He had never considered before just how dangerous any of these rivals of his might be. He might have pondered more seriously had he been able to hear Freddie out on the links.

"I haven't seen you in the longest while," that young

gentleman is saying earnestly to Carrie. "You seem to have so many engagements!"

It is an ominous sign, Freddie, those engagements!

"I've lots of books I want to send you," he continues.

Carrie's expression changes ever so slightly.

"How nice!" she says. "But you won't send any yet, will you? I am simply rushed to death, aren't you? I haven't read anything in weeks!"

But Freddie is either not rushed to death or is thinking of something else.

"It isn't just the books," he bursts out. "They're just symbols—symbolic, you know, of all the things I wish I could do for you!"

He has forgotten to snap his fingers during these remarks—an omission that sends a little shiver over Carrie. He must be very much in earnest.

"Who could want anything to-night, Freddie?" she says, a trifle hurriedly. "Isn't it just perfect for a dance?"

But the dance of the moonbeams on the river below them has no more charm for Freddie than that other dance upon the club piazza a few yards away.

"It is perfect when I am with you, Carrie," he says in a low tone. "Somehow, you're not like the other girls. You are different."

Carrie laughs as lightly as she knows how. She recognizes the earmarks of the speech.

"You just think I am this minute, Freddie," she says. "You needn't jolly me! We all heard of your goings on in Troy. What was her name? Everybody in Melchester had you married off to her last year. And now it's me!" And she bows before him in mock gratitude.

But Freddie is in no mood to jest.

"Oh, I just took her to one dance," he says irritably. "The way the fellows talk makes me sick!"

"Yes," answers Carrie, seizing her cue, "none of us wants to settle down yet, do we? I know I, for one, don't. The world is too lovely. Think of all there

is to see that those stars and that moon gaze down upon!"

This might all be a quotation from her mother except for the moon and stars.

But Freddie is doubtful.

"I didn't think you were that kind," he remarks. He looks at her a moment. "Somebody will carry you off one of these days before the rest of us know it. That's what I think," he ends moodily. He has caught sight of S. Sydney Tappan on the piazza.

Poor Freddie! Have some of Fate's whispers reached ears for which they were not intended?

Carrie's laughter is clear, however, reaching even to the piazza where Sammy stirs so uneasily on the railing.

"I'm not so fatally attractive as all that, Freddie," she laughs.

Freddie's heart nearly bursts then with the courage it takes to make his next remark.

"I think you are!" he says.

"Freddie!" she laughs mockingly. "Trying to flirt with me!"

She will not be serious. It is the natural caution of budding womanhood. Her confusion, however, although it does not appear to Freddie, is the effect which Fate has intended to produce. Only wonderment at this new person in the guise of Freddie Halton could ever have made her miss the music of that new dance beginning upon the piazza. It is the next dance, a waltz with Sammy. Halton hears it with a sinking heart. He has just started making progress and now they must return to the brightly lighted porch where Sam Tappan will take Carrie away from him. It was odd the way he fell so easily into the rôle of the heavy villain then.

"Another encore," he says slyly, motioning toward the twinkling club. "I am very fortunate to-night."

Oh, wicked Freddie!

"Let's walk then," says Carrie ingenuously. "It's damp standing here." Passing and repassing other

couples will be safer than this dark spot beside the river, she thinks.

That is why they walk out upon the moonlit links instead of returning to the club piazza where S. Sydney Tappan sits and waits, a strange feeling gradually overwhelming his heart. The floor is filled and the number in full swing now and he can see Carrie and Halton talking earnestly out in the moonlight. Can it be that she has forgotten? Or is it that she does not care? Either supposition is unbearable.

Well, there are other girls, he thinks grimly—Carrie is not the only one. It is his set jaw and clenched hand that give his thoughts the lie, however. Foolish Sammy! He has never realized before the place she has in his heart because her favour has always come to him so easily, so frankly bestowed. Her other engagements have always faded away before his invitations, dances with her requiring only that he write them down upon her program. There have been none of these quarrels or coquettish misunderstandings with which young ladies sometimes bedevil their anxious suitors or are bedeviled in turn. He has never realized the strength of his desire to win this girl for himself, because the pathway of his courtship has been made so smooth by their mutual attraction.

He is realizing it now, however, as his pulses throb with a new, queer pain. Has Halton captured her away from him, he wonders, while he himself has been fatuously wasting his time? The thought is unbearable. It is the first billow of an ocean of passion which will engulf him—that wave of feeling that is so plain in S. Sydney Tappan's dark face. No Freddie Halton shall take Carrie away from him—no, by Heaven, he wants her himself! She shall not be captured so easily if he can prevent it—shall not forget in an instant all that their good times have meant! For the first time in his life S. Sydney Tappan is thoroughly, exquisitely conscious that he cares for Carrie—that he must have her though thousands stand in between. She has

acquired a value of a sudden that cannot be estimated!

And it is that moment that Fate chooses for bringing Carrie and Freddie Halton back to the piazza.

"Why, isn't this an encore?" Carrie asks wonderingly of S. Sydney Tappan, as he stands gazing at her sternly. She is a mixture of culprit and angel in his mind.

"Yes, isn't it?" echoes Halton plausibly.

But Sammy is looking at Carrie with a glance that is new to her—a glance that has forgotten the existence of Halton in its desire to claim the girl before him.

"It's the twelfth," he replies, in a tone of voice that corresponds oddly with his glance. There is something of the Final Judgment Day in both. He seems hardly aware that Halton has disappeared, muttering something about a partner, and that Carrie is alone in front of him.

"Oh, I'm so sorry, Sammy—I didn't know," she says contritely, holding out her hands in an unconscious gesture. It is all she can do to keep one of them from flying to her throat.

But the floodgates inside S. Sydney Tappan are loosed and emotion sweeps full tide into his voice.

"Let's walk," he says huskily, "I can't dance just now."

They have hardly reached the path beside the river before the tumult inside him finds expression. He loves her, has always loved her, and will die unless she loves him, too.

"Carrie!" he cries passionately. "Carrie, tell me you love me! You've got to tell me! I can't stand not knowing now!"

He never knew afterward whether she answered him or not. He only knew that he had swept her into his trembling arms the next moment, and kissed her blindly on the fresh, cool mouth and slender throat, and crushed her to him until she whispered, "Let me kiss you, too!" to bury her face then upon his shoulder, half in shyness half in gladness, her loosened hair playing riot across his cheeks. He did not need to have her



“I forgot, Sammy . . . I can’t see you any more!”

answer then. Every fibre of her cried it aloud. To the day of his death he never forgot that first instant when he held Carrie in his arms. . . .

It is a little later that she recollects, with a gasp of whimsical horror, her mother's parting instructions over the banisters.

"I forgot, Sammy," she says then, half laughing, half sobbing. "I can't see you any more!"

"Why not?" demands Sammy lightly. All conversation seems a trifle distant, far away, with the sweetness of their new-found passion so fresh upon them.

"Mother!" says Carrie, unconscious of the satire of her position as she says it. She sees it the next moment. "She doesn't want to encourage you!" There is a funny little smile on her face.

Encourage! Had you been a cartoonist, Sammy, you would have laughed aloud. As it was, he smiled.

"Why not?" he asked. He said it as much for the sake of making a remark as anything.

She pressed closer to him to ward off the hurt of her answer.

"Because you aren't rich," she said. It was odd the way she hurried the rest of her remark so that he could forget the beginning. "As if that made any difference! So long as we love each other there can't be anything else that matters very much."

It was not her youth that prompted the remark, either. Such has been the philosophy of lovers since the world began.

They had no opportunity for discussing that always interesting subject just then, however. A voice from the piazza was shouting out their names in a tone calculated to reach even their unheeding ears.

"Oh, Sam! Oh, Carrie! Good-night! Sorry you can't be with us this evening! Oh, there you are! Well, well!"

"Good gracious!" blushed Carrie in the dark, "do you suppose they saw?" and drew away a little instinctively as she said it.

But Sammy drew her to him again.

"They wouldn't have called us if they had!" he answered wisely. Manlike, he did not care to give up so quickly what he had just won.

To both of them, afterward, the rest of the evening seemed to have passed almost in a moment; even the ride home lasting but an instant—an instant snatched from paradise, during which they were magically and all too quickly transported to Washington Avenue.

Clever Sammy! He gave the coachman two dollars as they approached the Schroeder mansion and purchased thereby a half-hour more of heaven at a ridiculously low price. What the coachman thought he never stopped to inquire afterward. But they drove back to the deserted club where Sammy made a pretense of getting out and going inside in search of something. Whatever it was, he plainly did not find it, because out he came still empty handed in a moment, and they drove again to the house upon the elm-shaded avenue.

It was two o'clock when Carrie tiptoed up the stairs to her room in an effort to avoid the inevitable head which was always thrust out from her mother's door whenever any late member of the family sought to avoid the publicity connected with arriving after midnight.

Mrs. Schroeder, in a dressing-gown, met her as she opened her door, however.

"Did you tell Sam Tappan what I told you to?" she demanded. She had just returned from an evening out herself so was still wide awake. The question had not been absent from her mind since the door closed behind Carrie at six.

The reply was all that she could reasonably expect.

"Yes, mother," Carrie answered in a low voice. It was low, this time, because she felt the deception of her answer, and her conscience was crying out for a full reply.

But her mother gave her no opportunity just then.

She was not thinking of her daughter, nor noticing that new look of starry happiness in her eyes—Sam Tappan had been told, and that affair was off her mind at last. That was all.

“Well, thank God for that!” she said half to herself. She could sleep easily again.

As for Carrie, I am sure that she was satisfied, too. Sammy had taken his dismissal, I should say, very well indeed!

CHAPTER V

IN WHICH SAMMY HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. SCHROEDER AND RESOLVES TO IMITATE HIS EXAMPLE

IT WAS a strangely agitated S. Sydney Tappan who sat in the law office in the Preston Block the day after the dance at the Country Club. He had arisen to pleasant reflections—reflections, I need hardly state, of a certain young lady. He can never forget, he has told himself all day, the shyness of her passionate surrender nor her whispered words of love. The world consists of little except Carrie to him just now. He is in the law office to be sure, but simply for the purpose of waiting until two o'clock can arrive so that he can call her on the telephone. Two o'clock is the hour when the family has scattered to its several diversions; and until then life is quite barren, a desert to be traversed with infinite dreariness.

Two miles away, however, events are transpiring which will add a distinct liveliness to the journey's end. Freddie Halton is having breakfast with his mother.

"You shouldn't stay so late at the dances, Freddie," she is saying anxiously. Freddie is quite pale, perhaps from his efforts to dispose of poached eggs before setting forth for that factory which began some hours ago.

"I'm all right," he growls, forgetting to snap his fingers. He has forgotten to do so since that moment upon the piazza the night before when he surrendered Carrie to Sam Tappan.

"Was it a nice dance?" his mother inquires.

"Oh, yes," he admits. "Only everybody is getting so twosy!" He makes a little gesture of disgust.

Mrs. Halton scents gossip from afar with the trained nose of the middle-aged matron.

"Ridiculous, at your age!" she says. She herself was married at this same age which her Freddie has attained. But we forget our youth as quickly as is possible. It is more convenient so. "Mrs. Schroeder and I were talking about it at the club. Young people are so silly. I hope you won't get all tied up with some girl at your age!" She is wondering what young lady has been casting eyes upon her heir apparent.

"No danger," says Freddie, half humorously. "If I were Mrs. Schroeder I'd keep an eye on Carrie, though. Sam monopolizes her so nobody else gets even a chance. Max had to shout for them before they'd come in last night." He is almost spiteful as he reviews the events of the evening before.

"I'm sure *I* don't know what she's thinking of—to allow it!" says Mrs. Halton. This bids fair to be interesting.

There is a spark of youthful honour in Freddie, however.

"Oh, Sam is all right, I guess," he says.

"Well, he can't support her for a minute," rejoins his mother pityingly. "Some one ought to tell her!"

She does not mean that Carrie should be informed. She means some one ought to tell Mrs. Schroeder. Perhaps it will be news to that lady to be told that S. Sydney Tappan is courting her daughter.

It is why she calls for Mrs. Schroeder at eleven o'clock, ostensibly to take her shopping. It may be that this bit of news will be in the nature of a bomb. If such should, happily, be the case, she wishes to be where she can see the carnage close at hand. She does not, therefore, waste any time.

"The young people are so frightfully up to date these days, aren't they?" she says in her tired voice.

"They're plain fools, if you ask me," her victim responds.

Mrs. Halton lights the fuse then, as they turn into the traffic of the downtown section.

"Well," she says, "I told my Freddie very plainly this morning that *he* needn't indulge in any of this 'twosing'—as they call it. I don't want any daughter-in-law presented to me before she is out of short dresses!"

Twosing! Expressive simile!

Mrs. Schroeder takes the bomb to her bosom.

"What twosing?" she asks grimly. She only knows of certain calls.

"Well, Freddie admitted that the dance at the club last night was simply no fun at all, because the party was split into little couples who didn't even take the trouble to come to the veranda to dance—except every now and then. Imagine! At their age! It's too ridiculous. All those girls ought to marry men at least ten years older. How can those boys make enough money to marry them? Unless we parents step in and give our countenance to the whole thing! Which I for one won't do. We simply shouldn't allow it! We are just storing up trouble for ourselves if it goes on."

Mrs. Schroeder gives a short laugh. "It's what I gave Carrie to understand about that Sam Tappan," she says. "There's one twosing party that is broken up!"

There will be no one to give any countenance to our Sammy, you see. But Mrs. Halton is watching the short fuse now.

"I am so glad you know about it then, Elsa," she sighs sweetly. "I was wondering whether or not I should tell you about last night!"

Bang! It is the bomb!

"Last night!" says Mrs. Schroeder, turning sharply to her friend. "What about last night?"

"Oh, you don't—you hadn't——" stammers Mrs. Halton in excellent confusion.

"No. I don't. You tell me this moment, Grace Halton," exclaims Mrs. Schroeder energetically. What a splendid victim she makes!

"I wouldn't have mentioned it for worlds, positively worlds!" murmurs Mrs. Halton. "Only I thought, that is I understood—that what you were referring to——" she stops, a splendid picture of kind heartedness. The victim, however, is determined, now, to know.

"Go on," she commands, compressing her lips.

A sudden rush of confidence seems to overwhelm Mrs. Halton. She will tell her friend, no matter how unpleasant it may be for both of them. The truth, after all, should be our first consideration.

"Well," she says, "they were all talking about it, Freddie said. It was so noticeable. Max Stimpson calling and calling for them—Carolyn and the Tappan boy—and, well, they simply weren't at the dance at all! Just out on the links together, in the pitch dark all evening! There! I am so glad I told you. I have just felt, ever since I heard it, that I should tell you. Not, of course, Elsa, that there was anything wrong going on—but you know what young people are. And how people do talk!"

I fear there is no one who knows that any better than these two riding in the electric. They are authorities on how people do talk in Melchester. If medals were only given for the gentle art they would stand an excellent chance for the gold and silver ones. Observe how the episode at the dance has grown beneath Mrs. Halton's skilful touch! Of such stuff is scandal made.

"Her father shall hear of this," says Mrs. Schroeder, in a tone of suppressed fury. So this is how she discourages S. Sydney Tappan! The wild humour of calling in Mr. Schroeder as an avenging Nemesis does not seem to strike her at all.

Mrs. Halton, however, is a little fearful lest her bomb has made too big an explosion.

"Now, I wouldn't do anything hasty, Elsa," she says sweetly. "It may all be terribly exaggerated, you know. I am sure Carolyn seems like a very sensible girl."

"Well, she'll hear some sense from her father and me, I can tell you that," says Mrs. Schroeder, though Mr. Schroeder is sitting just now in the office in the yellow brick building figuring on hams, and is not in the least aware of the honour that is being thrust upon him.

The roar of traffic runs past the Halton electric as the two women draw up before Jansen's Exclusive Ladies' Tailoring Establishment, just off the Main Street.

"Don't wait for me, Grace," says Mrs. Schroeder, as she alights. "Jansen is always so particular. It takes positively hours for the simplest thing."

She means, of course, that she wishes to call up the husband who sits in the yellow brick building and figures on hams. His job is cut out for him now. She will not always do all the work.

As he left the yellow brick building, just an hour later, Mr. Schroeder was visibly disturbed. Curse this Tappan boy, anyway! Why should he pick on Carrie, when Mrs. Schroeder was so unalterably opposed to the idea? Of the general case Mr. Schroeder knew only what his wife had been pleased to tell him, in those hours just before falling off to sleep when, as a rule, he received his instructions; but he knew that the Tappan boy must be extremely undesirable. If he could have had five minutes alone with Sammy, and told him the truth, he would have confided in him that there was absolutely no chance. Mrs. Schroeder objected. As it was, he knew that he would have to convince his daughter that her mother was right—and he shrank from the idea.

This it was that disturbed him so visibly. He was not so sure of himself when he thought of his eldest daughter. So far in life his business had stood him in good stead. Life appeared, by and large, to consist mostly of food. It seemed to him that when he had not been engaged in the buying and selling of foods, he had been busy discussing them with interested listeners. But, somehow, he had a vague feeling that this daughter

of his had lost interest in ideas of this kind—if indeed she had ever entertained them very seriously. What people could find to engage their attention when foods had been definitely disposed of, he himself could not imagine. It was why he had had that strange feeling of insecurity of late when confronted with the clear eyes and gaze of his daughter. He had an idea which amounted almost to a conviction that she was thinking of things with which he was not familiar.

His position in his business, these last few years, had been that of the autocrat secure in his place; his partnership in Hopkinson, Balmer & Lawrence giving him a sense of importance which the mere leadership of the groceries had never seemed to impart. The taste of power resultant had rather gone to his head, its plainest outlet, perhaps, being a loud habit of talking and, when his decisions for any reason were called in question, a disagreeable way of pounding on handy tables and chairs to drive home his point.

He had found this rather an easy method of quelling incipient riots among his offspring, lately. He simply yelled at them, and they subsided. But somehow, he felt, it had rather lost its force with Carrie these last few months. There seemed something lacking in the effect it produced on her.

It was why he sighed as he mounted the steps. Curse the Tappan boy, anyhow! It was going to be a most disagreeable affair.

Over the luncheon in the old-fashioned dining-room, with the heavy oak furniture and bespangled walls, there hung the ominous silence that always preceded a family storm. Mrs. Schroeder ate with a frown that made the two younger offspring doubtful of eating at all. They always steered with the wind. On Mr. Schroeder's countenance there was the look of the stern parent outraged. Hovering over Carrie, invisible to all but ourselves, there floated for the last time the shadow of Elsie Dinsmore, the girl who was so good in those stories of girlhood that it is a source of constant

wonder that she never died of it. Carrie, herself, is emerging from the mist of youth to-day, although as yet only flashes of vision illuminate her landscape. God and her father are still a little mixed in personality, obligations to her family and to her own self still tangled in one skein, might and right not yet abstractions, to be separated and examined. A few remarks which her mother has let fall on entering the house have left her little doubt as to the character of the tempest so plainly discernible in the offing—Sammy is to be finally disposed of. Just what she herself will think or do, she cannot see yet through that drifting mist.

The first drops of the storm are falling now, however. Let us lean forward a little and listen—as Annie is doing behind the pantry door. It is her Sammy of whom they are talking. Mr. Schroeder has determined to be diplomatic. So the stern parent will open the attack rather gently.

“What is this I hear about last night, Carolyn?” he asks, as he finishes his pie and pushes back from the table.

This use of her full name tells Carrie the storm is about to break. These parents are formidable to the girl of twenty-three, and she has to struggle to keep her composure. She must do what is right, and still manage to keep her secret.

“I don’t know just what you mean, father,” she replies quietly. There is just a suspicion of a tremor in her voice.

“You know well enough, I guess,” says her mother angrily. “If you don’t, you ought to. The whole town is talking about you.” The other two offspring have hurriedly bolted their dessert now, and proceed to make their escape before they shall be drawn into the fray. They are younger, and have not been to the dance.

“Talking about what?” Carrie asks quietly. Did some one see, after all, she wonders. It is all she can do to keep back the blush which threatens to spread its telltale colour through her cheeks.

"Your actions last night, of course," says her mother. "Spending the evening out on the links with Sam Tappan—after all my talking. I don't know what you can be thinking of."

It is the side issue that Carrie seizes immediately.

"It wasn't all evening," she says. "We just walked for a couple of dances."

"I don't care if it was two dances or ten," her mother replies angrily. "I won't have it!" The flame we saw lighted in Carrie's eyes that night of Sammy's call burns bright now.

"But it's not true!" she cries. "Who told you it was all evening?"

Her father feels that he has been silent too long.

"It makes no difference who told your mother," he says sternly. "This Tappan business has got to be stopped."

It was the first time that Carrie ever rebelled. She raised her head then, and looked at him clearly.

"Why?" she asked.

It was then that Mr. Schroeder raised his voice, and pounded on the table a trifle.

"It doesn't make any difference why, young lady!" he shouted. "You'll obey your parents and cut out this fellow! Do you hear me?"

His question was rather futile. They could hear him even out in the kitchen.

"But why?" asked Carrie, again. It was the beginning of her frightful desire to know the reason of everything. It gave her father a splendid opportunity for banging the table, however. I do not think he ever quite forgave his wife for the way she forestalled him. His expression, as she spoke, was that of a man from whom a table has been snatched away just as he is about to pound it magnificently.

"Because we won't have it, that's why," she responded coldly. She was clever enough to keep from putting the idea of marriage into her daughter's head. Her husband upset the kettle the next moment.

"I don't know what the boy is thinking of!" he said heavily. "How can he support a wife on his income!"

"Good heavens, Charlie! It isn't a question of marriage, not yet!" Mrs. Schroeder exclaimed. "If he was anybody he wouldn't try to monopolize all the girl's time when he isn't in any position to marry. That is the point!"

There! That is the point, Mr. Schroeder!

"What does he intend to be?" he asks his daughter. He has his cue now.

"A lawyer," says Carrie, in a low tone.

"A lawyer! Humph!" her father returns. "That takes a long time."

"Ten years," said Mrs. Schroeder, in her most unpleasant way. "When he is able to marry, he will want some nice young girl then. That is what always happens. Any girl who waits for a man is a fool!"

"Yes," adds Mr. Schroeder. "If he can't marry you, Carrie, he ought to leave you alone." I think he always really liked his daughter in spite of the fact that they could never agree.

But Carrie has learned more in the last ten minutes than in all her life before regarding her intentions.

"I don't want him to leave me alone," she says, with an effort. She has hardly admitted to herself before how much she cares for S. Sydney Tappan. But her parents have opened her eyes to the extent of her intentions in regard to him. She will marry him, if he will have her.

"That has nothing to do with it!" says her father. "The boy should consider your chances."

"My chances of what?" asks Carrie, surprisingly steadily.

"Making a good marriage, of course," replies her mother witheringly. The girl can't be a fool.

But Carrie is determined to follow out her course now.

"What is a good marriage?" she asks curiously.

"Marrying somebody—not that young fool," replies

her mother angrily. She was never good at explanations. They required real reasons.

"Somebody who can support you the way you have been used to," adds Mr. Schroeder. This style of remark always seems to shed a sort of glory on him, he thinks. It usually, too, eliminates the boy.

"But we don't want to be married yet," says Carrie. She would have said that there was no question of marriage between them had it not been for that conscience of hers. She could not seem to hide from herself the real truth.

Mrs. Schroeder heaves a sigh of relief.

"Well, you won't get a chance," she says truculently.

In Carrie, too, there is a great feeling of relief that the conversation is taking this turn. The affair upon the links bids fair to be forgotten, at least.

"I don't see how I can stop having anything to do with him just because he isn't rich," she says.

Her mother, however, is equal to the occasion.

"You don't have to see," she says majestically. "Your father will attend to that."

But Mr. Schroeder does not relish the job.

"Well, now, Elsa——" he begins. But his wife cuts him short.

"The boy can't marry her," she says icily. "The sooner it's done, the better for both. She would tell him herself if she wasn't a ninny." She rises then, and folds her napkin. "He will never be anybody. He is one of these dreamers!"

"I think he will be somebody some day," Carrie cries after her. But——

"Oh, you!" says Mrs. Schroeder. She herself has heard some of this particular young man's drawing-room conversation, and he is a fool. Where the girl has gotten these ideas she cannot imagine. Perhaps the boy has pulled the wool over her eyes. It was the first time that Sammy began to change a little in her mind. He was executing the first step around the

corner from fool to scoundrel then. He will be a scoundrel full grown before long.

"Well," says Mr. Schroeder gloomily. "I will see the boy, myself." He is gloomy because at heart he is rather a mild person; and he does not find the prospective interview attractive. It is merely inevitable.

It is an hour later that S. Sydney Tappan ascends the steps on Washington Avenue. He has been hastily warned of his approaching fate in a whispered telephone message from Carrie, but though his hands are a trifle clammy as he closes the door of the den behind him, he is putting up a bold front. After all, you see, this is the part of the hero! And our Sammy is always at home in the dramatic scenes.

Mr. Schroeder, however, does not seem to have a proper appreciation of heroics this afternoon. A remembrance of his own boyhood has come back to him as the young man before him stands fumbling uncertainly with his hat. He was not always fifty, and a retired grocer, you see. After all, what has he against this young man who has charmed his hitherto submissive daughter into such revolt against authority? I am afraid, Mrs. Schroeder, you should have stood outside and shouted advice to your better half through a key-hole. He is fast forgetting his arguments. It is with a distinct shock, indeed, that he is brought to the business in hand by the voice of our Sammy.

"Sit down, Sam," he says affably then. "Sit down."

A good half of the heroics fly out the window as S. Sydney Tappan sits down. There is evidently to be no battle at all, merely a discussion.

"It is about Carolyn," Mr. Schroeder continues, lighting a cigar, and offering our Sammy another. There is, of course, nothing about which to get excited, he is thinking. It is a mere matter of explanation to this young man before him, an explanation of a self-evident fact. The young man is in no position to marry. That it may be a youthful tragedy to S. Sydney Tappan and to the clear-eyed daughter who awaits the issue with

such tightly clenched hands in the drawing-room, does not appear to him. He is a man of little imagination. If the discussion should degenerate into an argument, why there is the old library table beside him! Whatever is not perfectly clear, he will pound home on that.

"I just wanted to give you a word of advice," he says, gazing carefully at his cigar. "Carolyn is too young to spend all her time with any one person, any one young man, Sam. Her mother and I don't like to see it. You young people are in no position to be married, or even engaged. Take my advice and leave Carrie alone for a few years yet—till you have made some money, and can give the girl what she has been used to."

He heaves a sigh of relief. He has put it much better even than he thought possible.

I fear the youth opposite him, however, does not appreciate the fine points of the presentment. A few years, he is thinking! Ye Gods! A few years! I wonder, Mr. Schroeder, did you ever figure up a few years when you were young? The total is not at all like that arrived at when figuring hams. I think Sammy was dumb for a moment, with a kind of horror, until he remembered his ten thousand dollars, that small remnant of the once fair Tappan fortune. He had not thought they would come in so handy.

"I have a little money," he begins modestly. He means he has millions.

But Mr. Schroeder shakes his head quite paternally. He has nothing against S. Sydney Tappan if only he will leave his daughter alone.

"You will need it, my boy," he says, "if you are going to be a lawyer." He knows it is but ten thousand dollars.

He recollects his duty then. Perhaps a footstep upstairs has reminded him that he has a wife to whom to report once this interview is over.

"A few months, and you will have forgotten all this nonsense," he continues. "Don't tie yourself down at

your age, Sam. Cut out this calling and dancing business, and get down to work. There is nothing finer in the world." I think he might have gone on expounding the joys of the grocery business had he not checked himself and turned again to the subject in hand. "Give Carolyn a chance to see some of the world. See some of it yourself. But don't tie each other down. That is the thing, Sam. A great mistake!" Evidently he can conceive of no worse fate than this mutually weighted condition.

Somewhere, somehow, however, S. Sydney Tappan feels, there is a flaw in these remarks of the grocer's; but he cannot for the life of him seem to find it. That the heights which they two, by their mutual bondage, would keep each other from scaling are the heights of gilded materialism—gilded for Mr. Schroeder by the hand of his wife—the youth of Sammy does not allow him to see. He can only sit silent while Mr. Schroeder blunders on—to blunder, miraculously, into victory.

"It isn't possible for either of you to know your own mind at your age," he says. "Especially Carrie. Give her a chance, Sam, even if it costs you a thought or two. You are man enough for that, I am sure."

Man enough! Why this is the part of the hero! Surely if there is anything a man should do, our Sammy is the one to do it!

"I see what you mean," he says, slowly, at last. "I don't want to tie her down to me."

"It means tying you down, too," Mr. Schroeder adds. "There is nothing that holds a young fellow down more than marrying before he can afford it." He thinks this may be an added inducement.

But, though the truth, it is an error in judgment. S. Sydney Tappan will sacrifice himself for Carrie, but not to gain anything for himself. That would not be heroic at all.

"I am only thinking of Carrie," he says proudly. In spite of his heroics, however, his eyes fill a little with tears. He is feeling very much alone in the world

at this moment. He does not see exactly how he will get along without Carrie now that he has found her; but if it is the thing he should do, why, he will do it. He always started out bravely, did our Sammy.

"Just try it for six months," says Mr. Schroeder cheerfully. It is the same tone of voice in which he recommends the Schroeder brand of good coffee. "Leave each other alone for that length of time, and see if I am not right."

Sammy's heart fails him just a little.

"You mean not see her," he asks, "at all?"

"Certainly not," says Mr. Schroeder. The thing is nearly settled he feels, and he can get back to the brick building soon now, and finish those hams. If the trick is not turned in six months, it will be very simple to insist then upon a longer period. Meanwhile, everything will be arranged satisfactorily. These family troubles are very annoying.

That it means to the young man opposite him renunciation of all his twenty-five years hold dear, does not occur to him for a single instant. It is a peculiarity of those who usually ask for the sacrifices of this world that they fail to realize that there can be any other standard of value than their own.

The real fanatic in this case, however, has been standing, for some minutes now, in the old-fashioned carpeted hallway awaiting the departure of Sammy. It is time, Mrs. Schroeder is thinking, that the thing was finally settled. It should be a matter of very few words, with quarter neither asked for nor given. It is their daughter for whom they are fighting with this boy. He must be disposed of before he does any harm. That there can be any distinction between Carrie's happiness and the career that has been picked out for her does not enter her mind. There was never room for a doubt, no matter how tiny, in the mind of Mrs. Schroeder.

"My goodness," she says to her daughter, "what on earth do you suppose your father can be finding to say to him all this time?"

What can there be to discuss? It is why, when ten minutes have passed and no rejected suitor has yet come forth from the den, that she can control herself no longer. Self-control was not one of Mrs. Schroeder's talents.

"I will settle him myself," she says then. She is brave because she knows the enemy is weak. There are no Schroeder millions behind *him*.

It is a moment later that she appears in irresistible force in the doorway, just as our Sammy has finished saying, bravely, that if it is the right thing to do he will do it.

"You are not wanted here, Sam Tappan," she says angrily. "If you have any sense you won't wait for Mr. Schroeder to tell you so. There is the door!"

The door! I think it was a full moment before S. Sydney Tappan realized that Mrs. Schroeder was actually showing him the door. It was odd how it changed his whole conception of the part he should play then. He would not have given up Carrie after that remark though a world had stepped in between. He was a hero, who had been hurled back by a dragon—not a knight errant sacrificing himself for his lady.

That proud blood of his Dutch ancestors sprang up and coloured his cheeks. And the hero spoke.

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a low voice from which he tried hard to keep out his anger. "I did not understand. I see now that we are mutually unpopular."

I think it was the implied slight on the family that stirred Mr. Schroeder so. He saw all those Schroeder stores stretching before him for blocks. What unheard-of impudence. The Schroeder family unpopular with anybody!

"That will do, young man," he said angrily. "The Schroeders don't care for you." I think he was lost in horror at the *lèse majesté* of the young man's remarks.

It was his wife who went on.

"Nor any one who can't even support themselves," she added. "I don't want any penniless fools around here!"

I must give her the credit, at least, of always speaking her mind. People always knew just where they stood with Mrs. Schroeder.

Sammy, however, has his hat in his hand now, as he stands on the doorstep, and looks out on the street. What a sight for the past generation! A Tappan refused at the hands of the Schroeders! Verily, times have changed.

"Money isn't everything," he says, then, with more wisdom than he knows. "That can be gotten."

And he has gone down the elm-shaded Avenue with this slur upon the enormous Schroeder achievements before any answer is forthcoming, in his mind a total forgetfulness that Carrie is still waiting in the drawing-room to know the result.

Money, he is thinking; so that is the real requirement in this world. Money! How has it happened in all the Tappan training that this subject has been so neglected? Money! Do lawyers ever make very much money, he wonders? It is plain that old Mr. Dabney has never made any. If Mr. Schroeder has made so much, however, it ought to be easy. He does not appear to be a colossus; and he has made it in business. In business. . . .

Well, we can now introduce Mr. Pike. Yes, you may look up, now, from that pile of bills payable, Mr. Pike, and gaze on your "New Capital Required to Expand a Large and Growing Business," as he turns into the Preston Block and mounts the stairs to Mr. Dabney's office. The *Democrat Herald* printed your very flattering letter in full—such satisfied advertisers do not write in every day—but I think at least half of the credit should have gone to the Schroeders.

The law is not the only way of amassing a fortune when one already possesses ten thousand dollars.

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH MR. PIKE MAKES HIS APPEARANCE ONLY IN ORDER TO DISAPPEAR FROM VIEW

YOU who have read the biography do not recall the name of Pike. It is because he is mentioned as an unsuccessful business venture of S. Sydney Tappan's and not by name. He was the gentleman whom Fate allotted to our Sammy as pilot through the commercial maelstrom—a pilot, alas! who, under the pretense of putting in plumbing, steered the ten thousand dollars straight on the rocks.

That Mr. Pike had been installing plumbing in Melchester for some twenty years is, as a matter of fact, an example of human credulity with very few parallels. He had tended furnace once, in time gone by, for one of Mr. Schroeder's partners and in this way obtained a recommendation when things mechanical were under discussion. And it was thus that the fable of his ability had had origin. But that he had lasted these twenty years as a contracting plumber was due wholly to the favouring smile of chance. His guesses had averaged nearly as well as correctly figured estimates might have. There is to be added the fact, too, that when plumbing which he had installed required repairing, he had usually been the man who was called in for the job. So that for a number of years he had succeeded in burying again most of his own mistakes.

His guesses during the last few years, however, had been particularly atrocious. He seemed to guess wrong not only on the jobs, but also on the repairs! And except for a few of the older generation the fashion of

simply calling in Pike the plumber to fix the thing up appeared to have gone out of date.

Not until the pile of bills payable had risen to such an alarming height that the fact was evident to even his foggy mentality, however—not until then had he conceived the brilliant idea of expanding the business! This business which grew so rapidly that the bills piled in faster than he could collect money wherewith to pay them! Forthwith the advertisement in the *Democrat Herald*.

To Sammy it came as a magnificent chance. A business which consisted simply of buying homely earthenware articles and installing them at a handsome profit over the cost appeared to his ready gaze as the acme of safety—safety, somehow, being considered the hand maiden of dullness. Surely no business could be duller than installing plumbing—hence its surpassing safety. No adventurer of high finance he felt sure would ever be attracted by the romance of plumbing. He did not know that Mr. Pike was an adventurer on uncharted seas without sextant or compass—and supremely unaware of the fact.

It is almost needless to state that it was the ten thousand dollars which secured for S. Sydney Tappan the honour of accompanying him on the voyage. Positions as partner in growing businesses do not drop from the clouds. It would have been difficult for Mr. Pike to have secured a worse addition to his crew than Sammy, however. To see Sammy was to know instinctively that he did not understand in the least about plumbing—just as to view Mr. Pike without being aware of his inner workings convinced the most hardened that here at last was a plumber. Appearances count for a great deal in this world of ours. The precarious state of Martin Pike, Incorporated, Plumbers, was not, therefore, greatly relieved by the entrance of our Sammy upon the scene.

He sat in the office upon a stool exceedingly high for even his long legs, and answered the telephone in the

long hot days of summer; figuring in even hazier manner than his experienced partner on the profits to be shared in the first six months. It always figured out to a glorious future. So much plumbing installed at so much profit—the profit seemed huge—resulted in such and such an income for him! Neither he nor Carrie ever doubted that it was a mere matter of time before they would show Mr. Schroeder how simple the whole thing was.

They were not aware then, either of them, of that outside world of Melchester. They had never heard of a street named Hague, nor of a house upon it called the Settlement House—had never heard the name of John Rouse, that iron moulder with the thick brick-red hair who was even then turning over in his burning brain the questions from which S. Sydney Tappan's inspiration was to emerge. Only in Carrie, in that passionate desire of hers to know the truth, the reason why of the things of this world, was there the first indication of the future.

Even to her, however, Washington Avenue and its side streets with the beautiful residences and lawns that gradually seemed to grow more ambitious until at last as country estates they lay proudly in the sunlight along the Country Club road—these were Melchester still to Carrie. There was no one else worth knowing save those who came forth in automobiles from flowered gates.

There were other people of course—there must be, the crowds on Main Street of a Saturday night were so enormous. But somehow they did not seem to count. They were in the nature of a background, a huge chorus in front of which the favoured few played the drama of life to the proper accompaniment and setting. She was only just dimly conscious that there was any real relation between the two, a responsibility to certain intangible ideals of a common humanity—expressed for her perhaps in Miss Strong, the nurse her charity committee supported for visiting the poor. Somewhere, dimly, there must be a duty back of it all.

They all talked of it vaguely, those girls in that Beecher Conference which she had joined at her mother's suggestion; talked and listened to meaningless reports and consumed pleasant quantities of tea and little cakes in comfortable libraries; and secured sufficient funds to keep their Miss Strong going, and their own minds happy with the thought of accomplishment and duty done.

A very good thing to belong to, Mrs. Schroeder would have told you, with many of the very best younger society upon its roster. Whence it really sprang, and why, or when, she could not have told you at all. It was always enough for her that it was the thing to do, to join, even though Mr. Schroeder had to make a little heavier contribution than would otherwise have been the case. All the canal boat driver's descendants belonged. There could have been no better reason for the thing's existence.

Just what would be finally accomplished I am sure none of the members ever knew. Only three classes in Melchester were sure of that: those older members who had resigned a decade ago; the proletariat upon whom they had practised so assiduously in vain; and the patient business men who had contributed so cheerfully because it could not hurt things as they were and would perhaps advance their families on the road to social preferment and possibly to Heaven, too.

It was only occasionally that a spark of the fire called divine, slumbering in some girlish breast, set off a fuse amidst the dangerous social explosive with which they dealt so lightly, and the futility of the business stood revealed before the light of real purpose and serious endeavour. Such explosions were usually frowned upon as being in poor taste, however. There was plenty enough work for all in merely understanding the Bible as it was understood a number of centuries ago. Present-day application could be safely left to the churches and the smiling clergymen who occasionally addressed the Conference. Meanwhile there was the

district nurse to fall back upon if the gates of Heaven needed any extra forcing.

That Carrie could ever become seriously interested in such things was perhaps the last thing in her mother's mind that first year of her daughter's membership. The only disturbing thing about it all to Mrs. Schroeder then was the fact that S. Sydney Tappan still called for Carrie and took her home from the meetings—meetings from which he most certainly should have been excluded. Had she been able to overhear any of those conversations as they walked home through the dusk she would have blown up the entire Conference without mercy.

The fuse was sputtering a little in Carrie.

"I think I shall take a class of girls at the Y. W. C. A. this winter, Sammy," she said earnestly. "I think I have gotten to the point where I really want to do something instead of just pretending. It's a place to start from anyway!"

"Fine!" Sammy replied lightly. "I can come and call for you there evenings, too!" Manlike, he saw only his own pleasure—the girls were quite lost sight of. "I don't see, though, what you know that you can teach them," he added thoughtfully. "Sewing?"

No, Carrie could not sew well at all.

"Or cooking?"

Heavens, no! Not Mrs. Schroeder's daughter.

"I don't know much really, do I?" she cried in dismay then.

But it was not the fashion for young ladies of the best society to know much, Carrie, so you were not alone!

"Oh, you can learn," Sammy said sagely. "I didn't know much about plumbing either when I started!"

Great heavens! Had six months of tutelage from Mr. Pike made of him a master plumber?

"I will learn," cried Carrie determinedly.

It was dancing that she taught them finally, those factory girls who whispered among themselves on the

chairs around the room and said to one another when Carrie came in, "There she is, Carolyn Schroeder!" It was the closest to the society column they could come. Carrie always had a tiny heartache when she heard it. It was the beginning of her infinite pity.

It did not occur to either Carrie or S. Sydney Tappan that winter, however, that the foundations of their own existence might be in any danger of slipping. The amount of plumbing that Martin Pike, Inc., was doing seemed truly stupendous to the new partner. That the bills also were not lolling by the wayside Sammy was not aware. They came in to be sure, but so far the ten thousand dollars had paid them magnificently. That the splendid guesses of the senior member were weirder than ever and the credulity of Melchester nearer to the breaking point did not appear upon the surface. Financial reports had assured Sammy that two-thirds of the failures in business came in the first year and from lack of sufficient capital. The firm of Pike had been going some twenty years. In fact, their own plumbing on Hawthorne Street had been put in—and repaired very regularly—by this very same firm! Add to this the ten thousand dollars and there surely remained very little about which to worry! It was thus that he talked to Carrie. . . .

Well, the biography, if you remember at all, calls it, casually, his first failure. It is an odd thing, nevertheless, that without it he might never have been the subject of a biography at all. It was the first thing in S. Sydney Tappan's life that he ever finished. That he should have chosen a plumbing business tottering to its grave for his first attempt at finishing the thing he had begun was a supreme irony which he never appreciated. Yet that he did finish it is to his everlasting credit. It was the first thing our Sammy stuck to grimly until the bitter end. I wonder would we be very far wrong if we called it his first success?

It was late in March that the ship of Pike, Inc., disappeared with S. Sydney Tappan's ten thousand dol-

lars on board. Mrs. Schroeder saw the notice of the bankruptcy in the evening paper just before that seven o'clock dinner. She tossed it across to her husband.

"Well," she said grimly, "I guess that's the end of him!" She had been justified after all—though she had never entertained any doubt on that point, of course. She did not have doubts.

"The end of who?" her husband inquired. Alas! business had been pressing of late and Mr. Schroeder had forgotten that the firm of Pike was being conducted as a lesson to him the past year.

"That Tappan boy," his wife replied. "That ought to finish him!" Certainly Carrie would not propose to marry a pauper!

It is a question, however, whether Mr. Schroeder ever got past the market quotations in time to look at the item. He remembered the Tappan boy only as a frightful example of the ignorance and impudence of the new generation. Boys certainly had not been like that when he was young. They had had respect. He felt the need of agreeing with his wife, nevertheless.

"Yes, indeed," he said vaguely, "I don't think he will bother again. Or Carrie either. It ought to be a lesson."

His wife was already sharpening her axe.

"I'd like to know what she will say to this!" she said vindictively. She always enjoyed a victory to the full. It did not seem to occur to her that Carrie had most likely known for many heart-breaking weeks of the approaching failure of Pike, Inc. An engagement was impossible now! That was her only thought. Things were always social to her, never spiritual. That engagement could be merely a state of mind would probably have called forth from Mrs. Schroeder the remark that the proper name for such a state was insanity.

She stood over her husband for a moment, then, with the closest approach to a sigh that one could imagine from her:

"It will be social work, I suppose, now," she said. "She's always got some queer idea about her. Why the devil she can't be like any other decent ordinary person I don't know!"

Which only meant after all, if it meant anything, that Carrie could not be like Mrs. Schroeder. It was why she could not understand the calmness with which her daughter greeted the news of the failure at dinner that night.

"I would have told you sooner, myself," Carrie said calmly, "if I had thought you were interested in knowing."

It was one of the most silent dinners the Schroeders ever had. For some unknown reason Mrs. Schroeder did not bring out her axe. It might have been those unshed tears in Carrie's eyes.

CHAPTER VII

IN WHICH THE PATH OF LIFE BEGINS TO FORK, AND CARRIE AND SAMMY PART COMPANY FOR A WHILE

IT WAS not long before those forebodings of Mrs. Schroeder's bade fair to be realized.

"Father," said Carrie at breakfast several weeks later, "what would you think if I went into *real* social work?"

"Social work, eh?" her father repeated vaguely. Social work! He always repeated thus, so as to gain time in which to think. Social work? He has a dim glimpse of meetings and settlement houses and things—well, things like that. "Why very nice, my dear," he says finally. He knows that Mr. Hopkinson is always contributing some of the firm's money to social work, and most of the society leaders seem to be interested in one way or another. This is a matter which belongs more in Mrs. Schroeder's province. He looks again at the editorial he has been reading.

"What would you do?" he asks, to show a pretence of interest. The editorial is on the insatiability of labour unions, a matter of interest to him just now, when the clerks in the store are showing a disposition to rebel against the benevolent ideas of the owners by taking the direction of their personal affairs into their own hands.

"I don't know," answers his daughter slowly. "I would like to do kindergarten work in the settlement. I like little children." This almost shyly, though the man is her father. "But it seems as if there must be other things that are more useful than that—such as being a nurse."

Mr. Schroeder puts down his paper very quickly.

"A nurse!" he says sharply. "Nonsense! That requires real work, and knowledge. Unpleasant work, too. That isn't social work. That is a profession."

"Perhaps that is why I should like it," says Carrie quietly. "I would feel then that I knew something, was doing something in the world."

"What is the matter with what you are doing, I should like to know?" he asks. "You have everything you want, haven't you?"

"Everything," she answers seriously, "except something to do."

His laughter was too loud to be mere amusement. I think it contained just the hint of a sneer—or was it a sense of superiority coming out? This girl before him cannot know much of the world.

"A couple of days in the store would cure you of those ideas," he says shortly. "A couple of days on your feet, from eight-thirty till six!" He laughs again, although this time with a slight sense of forcing his humour. There is a curious look of purpose and determination in those eyes across the table. "Take my advice, my dear, and don't worry about such things. You don't understand them."

His children usually appear to Mr. Schroeder in the light of genial incompetents, of whom, for some reason, he is inordinately proud—particularly the eldest daughter, with her indefinable air of breeding. Just where she has come by this air it is hard to explain. To Mr. Schroeder, however, she seems to shed a little added glory on the family, in spite of her ideas—ideas for which there seems to be no explanation.

"That is why I should like to be a nurse," she says, as she rises from the table. "I want to understand, if I can."

This morning is the first of many for Mr. Schroeder in which the unrest of his daughter is finally to stir in him a sense of impending doom. When one has built, as Mr. Schroeder, an edifice of success on a social basis

already made to hand, with its plan and justice unquestioned, nothing is more disruptive of one's peace of mind than simple questions. Perhaps the truism that nothing is ever perfect, is the only refuge possible for him who thinks. To the Mr. Schroeders of the world, however, it seems to be considered a duty to explain everything, enthusiastically, as the very best brand anywhere obtainable. I never have been able to withhold my pity for him during those mornings when a heartless fate left him opposite his inquiring daughter. Asking questions is better than many batteries of big guns, and Mr. Schroeder lay out in the open.

It was on those mornings when Carrie brought up the question of what her father thought a girl should do with her life, that he suffered the greatest casualties.

"But I cannot go on attending parties all my life," she would say, on these occasions. "Bridge, and dancing, and automobiling cannot last forever, father. Don't you see?"

Her father was badly hampered in those engagements, because the obvious answer was forbidden to him by his wife. Marriage could not be held out to Carrie as a goal with this Tappan affair still in her mind. It is just as well not to bring up the subject again they have decided. Mr. Schroeder has not realized quite so keenly before, however, that when marriage is eliminated from the list of his defenses, he is helpless. Confound it, why do girls have minds anyhow? Things would be much better all around if they had none at all—a belief he has privately held since early in his married life with Mrs. Schroeder. It is very plain that all they can do is to get married! To expect a solution when the great mystery of marriage has been eliminated is ridiculous!

He is glad, though, that his wife is not an early riser. He does not think that once she considers the time about to pass on their daughter a good marriage, which she will have to be, that she will not thoroughly consider the matter. He wonders, vaguely, why the

suffragettes wish to vote. Perhaps they wish to vote themselves careers.

There is but one career to his wife, and he knows it—the noble one of climbing in society. This is the mainspring which Carrie seems, somehow, to have mislaid; substituting for it questions about wages in department stores and a vast confusion of unintelligible aspirations to which there seems to be no answer. It is a poor exchange for the peace of mind of Mr. Schroeder. Women should, at least, be ornamental, he thinks, if they cannot be useful like their grandmothers were before them. It is true for all classes. He has noticed it before in the groceries. The more education that people have, the more dissatisfied they seem. The working people now! they are beginning to know too much to work! And his daughter has been educated until she is a menace to her own father's peace of mind. He can discharge clerks in the store when they get above their position, of course; but one cannot discharge one's own daughter. Education is a bitter thing.

And Mr. Schroeder leaves the house. His sense of impending doom is stirred, but that is all. After all, women are another sex.

He does not realize that when the seed of revolution flowers finally in woman, the end is near at hand. In his daughter's mind there are the first few gropings after justice which will finally result in her aligning herself in that new crusade whose end humanity cannot see as yet, but which is destined to raze those ideas of Mr. Schroeder's in its first assault upon the barricades.

Meanwhile, the bottom has fallen from S. Sydney Tappan's world. The firm of Pike, Incorporated, Plumbers, has dwindled to two dusty windows, and a sign for rent; while the accounts are being wrestled with by cheery lawyers for whom the failures of the world spell livelihood. The ten thousand dollars, so gayly risked, have taken wings, and vanished from our Sammy's gaze.

In his room on George Street he is sitting this afternoon, because he cannot muster up enough courage to go out. In the eyes of men, he thinks, S. Sydney Tappan is branded with the stigma of failure. For the first time in his life his belief in himself is shaken just a little. To fail at twenty-five is comparable, indeed, only to a social cataclysm from which the world can never rise again. It is the spirit of the age translating itself into terms of youth that keeps our Sammy lying on the couch there in the sunlight, disgraced beyond recall, disappearance his only hope—the spirit called success, which he feels staring at him, through the windows, with disapproving eyes. He is a failure, and must go. Just where, he does not know nor care. The soul's bitterness has little sense of proportion when the mind is young.

S. Sydney Tappan is doing some thinking this afternoon, however, which will not harm him. He is wondering just where all those friends of a year ago are now. Those friends of Williams, of the Country Club, of those dances and parties which meant so much to him when they took place. Unconsciously now, he sees, his environment has been changing, although he has not left this city of his youth at all. Carrie seems to him to be almost the only landmark left of all that was once his world. With a little wonder, he realizes now he has not seen Asa in months. Asa! At the word, his childhood rushes back upon him, and a sharp pain strikes him in the heart. The walls have faded, and he sees instead the room in college where he sits composing a last letter to the mother who already lies so quietly in the big front room upstairs on Hawthorne Street. Hawthorne Street! All the song of summer days, long quiet afternoons, and sunny rooms! Our Sammy chokes a little in his barren room on George Street. He is twenty-five and a man this afternoon, but he is thinking of his mother.

Let us look away and wait patiently outside until he comes down the steps an hour later, and turns quickly

to the left. I think there is a tiny, new look around his mouth, a look of patience. It is to become more noticeable soon, more pronounced, until finally his picture is not recognizable without it. He is thinking of Carrie. He may be a failure, but there is fight in him yet, if he but knew it.

His steps, however, are not turned in the direction of Washington Avenue. He crosses George Street, bound the other way; bound, as we shall see in a few moments, toward that little Dutch Reformed Church far down on Ross Street, where a youngish man with tangled yellow hair, like a thatch upon his head, sits in the choir room before an old grand piano; the dull light of the late winter afternoon struggling through the cloudy panes, falling on the sheets of half-filled manuscript, on the score of *Pelleas et Melisande* lying open on the table, on the half-closed blue eyes of its peruser, who reads it as a book. He is Ricorton, organist and choir master of this Dutch Reformed Church, a kindred spirit. Sammy cannot remember, now, where he first met this sympathetic musician. He knows only that they think alike and find mutual inspiration in the exercise of those talents of which the world seems to have so little understanding. It is perhaps no more than natural that they should have drifted into writing an ambitious comic opera together.

Ricorton does not rise at the sound of footsteps on the vestibule's marble floor, but calls out without looking up:

"Hullo, Tappy, how go the bills?"

Our Sammy smiles ruefully as he sits down.

"The firm of Pike is no more, Ric Vale!"

He stares at the music while Ricorton leans back and fills his pipe.

"Well, it's rough, Tappy," he says softly. "I can appreciate it." He stretches a little. "I've always been a failure, myself—and I'm thirty-five."

"You know something," answers Sammy. "I don't."

"Music!" says Ricorton scornfully. "Music!" He looks at the printed page over which Debussy toiled. "There is no money in music, unless you write junk."

"You have a job, though," says Sammy lifelessly.

"Yes," replies Ricorton. "I have a job where I yell at twenty chorus boys so many times a week, for a pittance; put on stuff that no one in the pews appreciates, and earn my salary by taking orders from a damn fool musical committee. A job—you said it!"

He puffs at his pipe, in the darkening silence. The twilight hides from view the lines around the mouth, the wrinkles in the forehead.

"They don't want a musician in this church. They want a social mountebank—a blonde yap, with pretty words, who will please the leading families and never drink a glass of beer. Down with 'em all, Tappy! I wish I were out of it, now."

Sammy pulls out some sheets of paper.

"I have the next song, Ric," he says. "It's awful, it's sickening—but it's what they want—and it's not plumbing!"

"Noble Tappy!" says Ric, as he reads it, and repeats the words of the chorus. "How you must have suffered! Well, the music shall be equally sickening, if I can make it so."

"Let 'em die in their seats!" says Sammy brutally. "We don't care as long as they'll come and listen, at two dollars each."

Ricorton, however, seems to have turned serious of a sudden.

"Well, Tappy," he says seriously, "perhaps we are fools. But we will finish the thing and see what it is worth, anyhow. We've nothing to lose. My time is up next month anyway; and Sternenbergs's letters about a new job aren't very encouraging. There is just about one more fling left in me."

Sternenberg is his agent in New York. I do not think, however, as he sits there, that he is thinking of

Sternenberg. He is seeing, once more, his life until now: the little church in Maine, and the shipyards beside the ocean where he played as a child; the strange, alternating ambitions of his boyhood, the one to be a ship mechanic, the other a great musician, resulting only in this career of organist, against the wishes of that father long since dead, and early widowed. It is many years since he has even heard from that scattered family of which he was once a distant part. He sees plainly now the reasons for his father's grim insistence on the business world for his son. Art is long, and life quite short when money is the object in view. Yet he is glad, after all, that he is not a clerk. The piteousness of the dull, blank life of the slaves of modern industry is overpowering to him. A few centuries ago, and he would have been an idealistic Francis Villon, this youngish man with the tender heart and thatchlike hair. In Melchester, as he sits this late afternoon, he is merely a wandering musician, with the pocketbook of a struggling dramatist and the soul of a poet—with underneath a genius that flashes out even in the poor cheap songs to which he prostitutes his talent, in order to eke out his living.

It is the last song of their opera's second act which they are writing to-day—the waltz song so necessary to any musical piece's success. They do not know that just at present musical producers will view askance a piece with three acts, and ask them to compress it into two. They do not follow those fashions of Broadway which are so necessary, except to genius, in the commercial drama. In fact, they are blissfully ignorant of what is before them, in the future of this comic opera on which they labour so cheerfully, and hopefully, with dreams of fame and quick success. "But a month"—Ricorton rises with a gesture of relief—"a month, Tappy, and we'll try Broadway ourselves!"

And Sammy nods his head. Broadway! At least it will not be Melchester. He is filled with a great hatred for Melchester now.

"How much money have you got?" asks Ricorton when the silence has grown long.

"About five hundred dollars," answers Sammy, "I guess."

"Why, a fortune!" cries Ricorton.

Sammy is recalling the rapidity with which the ten thousand vanished, however.

"Well, hardly," he says gloomily. At the moment the idea that he will ever accumulate any more money seems preposterous. Some scheme must be devised whereby this five hundred will last the rest of his natural life. It is partly because he feels that the Tappan name can never clerk in Melchester. Success at twenty-five seldom means a decade long plodding to a modest salary. He must make a success, yes, a fine success to win Carrie! *A coup d'etat!* Ambition could have taken no other form in S. Sydney Tappan. I think he was destined for Broadway.

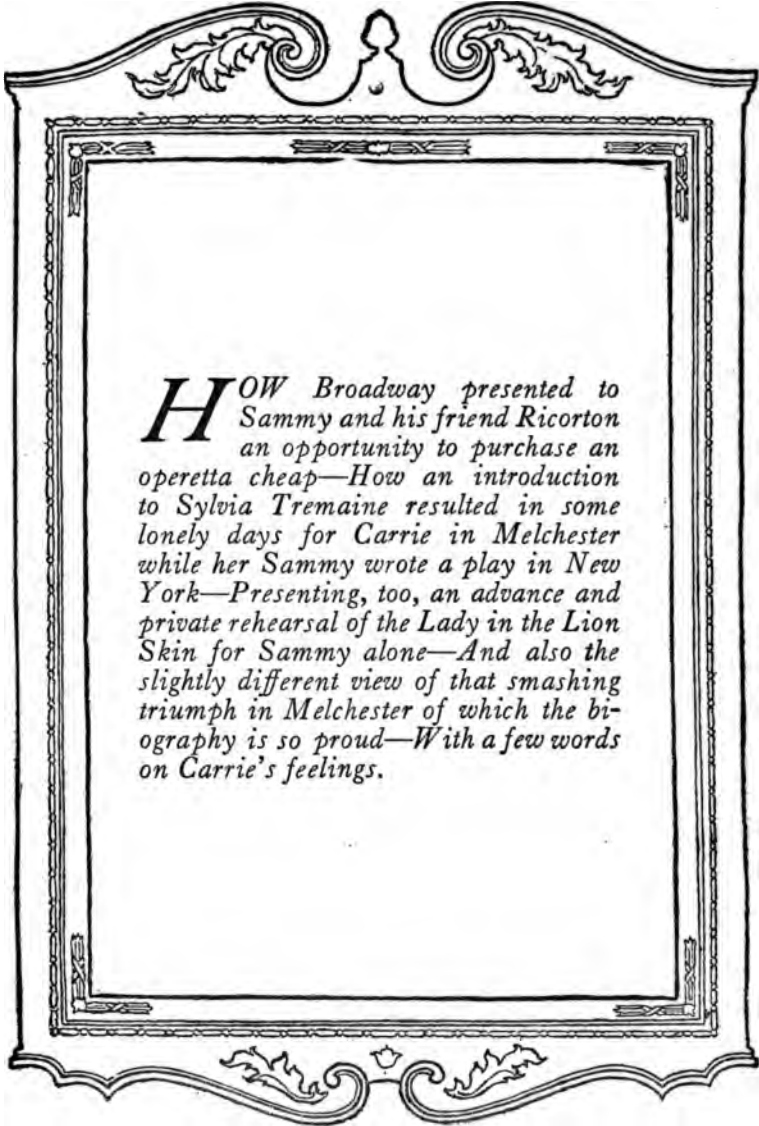
It looked like madness to old Mr. Dabney that night two months later when Sammy told him he was going to New York to try the show business with Ricorton. But it was only our old friend the Imp taking charge of S. Sydney Tappan that he might flee the town of his birth and yet escape the stigma of defeat.

This desperate advance upon the show business will make of him a gallant knight once more to Carrie, you see, going out from the home stronghold to assault the far-off city with colours flying, and drums beating, and in the rear only five hundred now of that once brave ten thousand who drove so courageously upon the plumbing citadel. Again the dramatic scene! In spite of defeat he can still play the hero.

As he sits in the Pullman smoking compartment not many nights later, however, he does not feel like a hero at all. He is trying hard to forget his last parting from Carrie, as he stares out at the disappearing lights of Melchester, a strange feeling in his heart—trying hard and not succeeding. All that he can see in the window before him is that compassionate face of hers.

her eyes brimming with tears for the empty days and nights ahead, days and nights no one else can fill. All he can hear, her low-broken "I just don't see, Sammy—don't see how we can ever endure it." All he can remember, the last convulsive sob she so bravely swallowed as she pressed his hand good-bye, and he kissed her soft cheek, while the twinkling street lamp shone on the budding branches of the elms in the spring dusk.

When he awakes in the morning it will be to a new life in New York, he knows; with Melchester but a half-remembered dream of mingled happiness and pain; before him a new world to conquer now and Ricorton and Carrie's letters the only links between him and the place that was once his home.



***H**OW Broadway presented to Sammy and his friend Ricorton an opportunity to purchase an operetta cheap—How an introduction to Sylvia Tremaine resulted in some lonely days for Carrie in Melchester while her Sammy wrote a play in New York—Presenting, too, an advance and private rehearsal of the *Lady in the Lion Skin* for Sammy alone—And also the slightly different view of that smashing triumph in Melchester of which the biography is so proud—With a few words on Carrie's feelings.*

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH OUR SAMMY BECOMES A THEATRICAL
MAGNATE, AND NEARLY RETURNS TO MELCHESTER—
BUT STAYS TO WRITE A PLAY

SAMMY's views of New York were almost numberless, but he was never conscious of seeing the city more than twice in his life. Both times he came to it direct from Melchester and Carrie. Both times it brought to him a sense of overwhelming solitude. The long vista of streets, noisily succeeding one another, with grim intervals of high walls and narrow, shut-in backyards, where the clothes of a nation seemed hung out to dry, guarded by old bottles and rusted iron and lean cats, with here and there a discouraged tree whose thin branches and colourless leaves seemed symbolic of the dying soul of the inhabitants; the endless succession of glimpses within the windows of poverty, the dirty bedclothes thrown back on the bed awaiting night and the return of the occupant; the glaring, confident, brightly painted signs shrieking commercial virtues to the sky; the dirty, tiny children playing discordantly on the hard and steaming sidewalks; the mounting grandeur of façade and neighbourhood, melting into the mighty buildings of commerce and industry, as the centre of the city drew near—culminating, at last, in the roar and rush of Broadway and Forty-second Street, with its endless confusion of trucks, and cars, and taxicabs, its million-voiced, million-visaged, hurrying humanity—to S. Sydney Tappan they all spelled but the one thing always—overwhelming solitude.

Solitude, and with it fear—the fear of ignorance. Could any one ever breast the current of this vast tide

of strident, hurrying people? Ever make a mark in the changing, swirling sands of fortune of this tempest city? This city of cities—not of brick or stone or concrete, but of brilliant success and miserable failure, of wealth and poverty—above, waves of the fortune favoured called from the ends of the continent, mounting higher and higher; below, little whirlpools of the dregs and flotsam, the ruined in mind and body, spewing forth disease and death; with between the treadmill of the dull majority, heavy, lifeless, ignorant, and menacing, revolving their daily round of grinding out a profit amid the solitude that throngs the streets.

Except for Ricorton, our Sammy is alone. Within his inside pocket is a New York draft for five hundred dollars. With these two aids he has come to storm New York, and learn what solitude can mean. He is looking, rather appalled if the truth be told, out of the window of his Pullman this morning as the panorama of New York rolls by his gaze, until the tunnel shuts off his view and the rising passengers say plainly that the journey's end has come.

It is Ricorton who takes charge, then, as they go in search of three addresses, each taken from a morning paper, and setting forth the glories of furnished rooms to rent at sums of from four to six dollars weekly. He has three introductions: one to an organist, a friend, once, back in Maine, playing now at noon hour in a department store; a second to that agent for choir masters and organists, Sternenbergh; and a third, ah, what hopes! the third is from the dramatic editor of the *Melchester Democrat Herald* to a Mr. Hazleton, a gentleman of consequence in the great Kane's office, that producer of many musical comedies, and legitimate prey for these two babes in the modern woods, with their masterpiece so carefully bestowed in our Sammy's bag. Sammy is under solemn promise to telegraph to Carrie just exactly what the great man says. Unless, however, he wires that the great Kane has fallen upon his neck and wept for gratitude, I fear she will labour

under the suspicion that there are very few discerning minds in the theatres. Appreciation of S. Sydney Tappan was always her criterion of judgment.

This back room on West Twenty-ninth Street looks quite inviting, Ricorton and our Sammy decide, as the landlord, French and muscular, yet singularly effeminate, stands smiling at them. He does not suspect, this landlord, that they are in any way connected with the profession—theatrical, of course—or he would discourage them from taking rooms with him. Uncertain pay, these under Thespians, and possessed of strange flitting habits, leaving trunks as security, to which no one ever returns.

S. Sydney Tappan, however, can be nothing less than a gentleman, M'sieu Clouet decides. A rare sight these days, upon the streets of this New York! There can be no mistaking the high cheek bone and forehead, the lines of chin and head. His companion—well, an artist, perhaps, with that straggling hair and black bow tie, and an artist M'sieu Clouet can understand, particularly when accompanied by a gentleman.

He is not too particular, this landlord—there is some doubt, for instance, of the lady, not quite young now, who has the hall bedroom on the second floor. She laughs and giggles nights, when presumably alone in her room. Of course, the light is on, and it may be that she reads. But the front door seems to close quite late, on evenings such as those, and a visitor from some one's room has gone home—it may not be, of course, from hers. Still she pays her rent, and that is a great deal these days in New York. No, M'sieu Clouet is not too particular. Unless business is quite poor he discourages actors—that is all. These gentlemen have trunks, too, they tell him—so that possibly they have come to make a long stay. He has gone down the stairs in a moment, still smiling, and the two wanderers are left alone in the room that is to see the death of one and change the course of the other's life.

This particular room is fitted up with two gas plates

by the closet, so that meals may be gotten by the occupant. On the floor the faded remnant of a once fine parlour carpet holds forth its invitation to the insect world, while beside the windows with their cheap green shades, brave makeshifts at linen curtains hang in white strings. Between the windows, the cheap oak dresser holds a cracked but still gallant mirror, reflecting the cheap prints and vegetable lithographs upon the walls, while upon one side of the room two beds take up the space, the one of iron, painted white, with strange curved head and foot, the other a small cot, with sunken centre and wan, anæmic pillow. Over all the desperate poverty of the chamber, the spirit of the faded carpet struggles, achieving a feeling in the beholder, somehow, in spite of all the tawdriness, of comfort and of home.

It is this which has made our two friends think the room quite inviting. They will be installed soon, Sammy with his typewriter, and Ricorton with his manuscripts. There is a restaurant around the corner on Eighth Avenue, past the inevitable saloon, called the Bee, at which they propose to dine for an average expense of twenty-five cents a meal. In this way, S. Sydney Tappan believes his five hundred dollars will last until he is famous. As for Ricorton, he is frankly looking for a job, although he does not know what he will say when they ask him what show he had out last. He only knows that he can read "Tristan et Isolde" at sight, and so does not fear any comic-opera music ever written. He at least can drill the show. The chorus work will come first, and it will be two months before the leader's *baton* can be pushed into his unwilling hands. At chorus work, too, he knows that he will shine. His work with choirs will come in handy, now.

The thing he does not know is that, with the coming of spring and warm weather, comes also the dull time for Thespians. Warm weather and summer, when the cafés around Forty-second Street will be thronged

with actors—two deep around the bar at Paddock's, the Hermitage, the old Cadillac, the Kaiser Hof, the chosen few at Shanley's where the bar prices are higher, and the rest scattered far and wide in Green Teapots and German Hofs, the Knickerbocker, and the other hotels and clubs around this district which is New York to them. They will be crowded thick into the leather-seated stalls exchanging reminiscences, each one for his own ears alone, stories in which managers and theatre magnates play undesirable, ignominious parts, and audiences are stricken dead all the way from Peak's Island to Frisco. A strange, wild country, this United States, from the accounts one may gather on Forty-second Street of a June afternoon.

This is what is coming to our Sammy and his friend Ricorton, until they will wonder, in stunned despair, if there can ever be jobs enough in the theatrical world to support this hoard, ever enough money taken in at box offices to pay even half the salaries these Thespians say they must receive before they will go out again.

Two days suffice to bring home to S. Sydney Tappan the realization that things cannot be hurried in New York. There are one or two people ahead of him, who have other plans than his. Hazleton has received them, in a bored way, at the great Kane's offices on Forty-sixth Street—he can barely remember who the dramatic editor of the *Melchester Democrat Herald* is—and has looked through their great work with languid interest.

Yes, he will have it read, he says. The book will have to be revised and rewritten, of course. They do not use left centre any more, and the name of the character who is speaking must be written in the centre of the page, not at the side. Directions, too, in red, not black. Quite useless probably, but he will have their readers look it over. No, there is no need of his hearing the music; they would not take it, anyway, if the book is not up to the mark. S. Sydney Tappan is shrewd enough to know that these are super-

ficial objections. But of what avail the knowledge, if they are potent with Mr. Hazleton? Their productions are all mapped out for next year now, anyway, the great man's secretary says—but they are always glad to look things over.

They have waited three hours to hear him say this, three hours in the dark anteroom beneath the supercilious scowl of the red-haired, lordly office boy; so that it is afternoon when they turn away, and go down toward Sternenbergs.

S. Sydney Tappan waits outside, to the sound of seven simultaneously played pianos in the rooms of a musical firm, each instrument suffering from a different composition, while Ricorton goes up in the elevator and interviews him.

Ric is rather grim faced when he comes out.

"It's robbery, Tappy," he says shortly.

Mr. Sternenberg has refused to secure him any job unless the percentage is raised another 5 per cent., and an advance payment made. He has been cheated too many times, he has told Ricorton. Secretly, however, I fear Mr. Sternenberg has suspected that our friend Ricorton wishes a job of some kind rather badly. He has told him of a certain Grote, a branch member of the famous chorus girl agency, where summer jobs for musical directors can sometimes be secured.

Ricorton does not hear Mr. Sternenberg telephoning to his friend Mark Grote, as he and Sammy bend their steps toward that gentleman's place of business, or he would not be so surprised when he finds that there, too, the same terms are in force except for the advance payment. It has looked to Mr. Sternenberg as if this particular seeker for a job has not the necessary cash to pay in advance. Perhaps that is why Mr. Grote so kindly waives that condition, as a favour, and does what he can for him. It is a favour! The extra 5 per cent. is not to be despised, you see.

Lyric Hall at ten-thirty! so the little man tells them. Mr. Hagaman is the name for which to ask. Room

number five, "The Honeymooners!" Ricorton has an opportunity to try for a position as musical director of a piece for vaudeville.

Sammy shall come along, they decide that night at Ricotti's, the 'Italian joint' on Tenth Street, where they have gone to celebrate their entrance into the world of art; and they drink the dark, red ink Signor Ricotti provides until the horses and animals which are painted on the windows beneath the balcony seem to wink and nod their heads at them, and the place assume the appearance of a courtyard. S. Sydney Tappan shall be introduced as an author to Mr. Hagaman, and perhaps secure an entrance, in this way, to the vaudeville world. Fame is thus at hand, and all necessity for twenty-five-cent meals at the Bee dissipated. A gay pair, our two friends to-night.

It is when they return to West Twenty-ninth Street at midnight, still flushed with the excitement of their success, that Sammy finds a letter thrust under the door of their room. It is from Carrie. She has written:

"Dearest Sammy, I have been thinking of you ever since we said good-bye, although I know I must not, but must be brave, and not make you homesick or miserable with my troubles. Home seems to have departed with you on the train to New York. I no longer can hope to run into you when I go downtown, and all the joy of existence seems to have gone. There is nothing but the houses left. I have been wondering so much, too, how you have come out with Mr. Kane, and what he said, and did, and how he liked it, and what he is going to do. I just know that he will take it! It is so good! And it will be a great success, and make you all a lot of money. Though I do not care so much for money as I do for the success which will enable us to be together, and let you do the things you ought to in the world.

"Father is just the same as ever, and so is mother! Is it just age do you suppose, and will we get that way? Or have they forgotten everything in the money father has made? Money success seems to be all they think of. I wonder is it true of everybody, after they have worked and struggled, and met the world, and our social plan has moulded them? Do they all become so hard and cynical?

"I have started my work down at the Settlement, in spite of

father's laughter and mother's sarcasm. She calls them 'scum!' I am sure your mother wouldn't if she had lived. Though the older generation do not seem to feel the way some of us young girls do. I wish you could meet Mrs. Lewis, our director—she is such an inspiration. She makes the work a pleasure. We are all just lumps of coal, she says. Undeveloped possibilities! A match to light us, and our power is magnificent. I wonder is father all burned out, or never lighted at all? Some of the people I visit work for him I find, but they don't know I am his daughter. I would not tell it to any one but you, but there are times down there when I am not proud of being Carolyn Schroeder.

"It is awfully late now, however, and I won't catch the last collection unless I stop. I am always hoping, Sammy, for your success—you know that, don't you? As always,

"CARRIE."

Ah, Carrie! She is the same always. Yet how far away that world in Melchester seems, how insignificant, our Sammy thinks, as he sits down beneath the crooked gas jet, and answers her letter so that she will know that the great Kane has said nothing yet that will warrant a telegram. They have a start now, however, in Ricorton's chance at this job and perhaps that is the start of "getting in!"

There is no habitat for day dreams, I suppose, but cracked mirrors and old green shades seem to harbour those of the grander sort—furnished rooms, by a kind of inverted power of suggestion, bringing to their occupants visions of fame and crowded theatres, steam yachts and country clubs. Carrie could never have realized from that letter of S. Sydney Tappan's that a second floor back room was sheltering two dreamy young men, with every chance for failure, and hardly one for success—armed, only, with unconquerable hope and profound ignorance, and Ricorton's ability to read music at sight.

An ability to read at sight! How far a trifle of real knowledge, a modicum of real ability will carry one in this world of mediocrity and slovenliness! Seven musical directors so far this next morning in Lyric Hall, and not one who can really read the world-old

harmonies and almost prehistoric melodies of "The Honeymooners" score. Musical memory, alone, should very nearly have sufficed to read it. It is why Ricorton heaves that sigh of relief as he hears the seven struggling with it, their fingers striking wrong notes, their eyes upon the fifty dollars per week which the union scale allows directors, while the other rooms of the building give forth that horrible malady of sound called rehearsal.

Gods of Harmony, who named Lyric Hall?

S. Sydney Tappan, sitting on an empty bench at the far end of the room from the piano and the little knot of people who are gathered round it, wonders when Ric will get a chance. That girl in gray, with the mouth whose corners seem always about to turn up in a smile, must be the leading lady, he reflects. She seems quite conscious of her figure, and not at all averse to treating bystanders to glimpses of her well-turned ankles, and more, as she sits swinging her legs on a table. Ruby, they all call her. Is that Irishman beside her the other lead, he wonders? There is something about the man which is not attractive, S. Sydney Tappan decides. It is not his loud checked suit nor his habit of posing either, he sees a moment later, but a sort of offensive self-assurance, speaking of inordinate conceit. He seems to have a strange habit of disregarding what is said to him, brushing aside the conversation, at times, to join in suddenly with statements made in an unanswerable tone. Jack Bantry is his name.

Sammy's thoughts are cut short, however, by the advent of Ricorton at the piano.

That the reason for the seven poor musical directors is because this vaudeville act has very uncertain backing is unknown to the musician as he sits down rather shakily, and tries a chord or two. He is as nervous as if this were the Metropolitan Opera House. In back of him, too, he can hear the people talking.

"Oh, quit being so sorry for yourself, Jack," the

girl called Ruby is saying easily. "You're a regular gloom these days!"

"Get on to the wig," Bantry retorts, with evident reference to Ricorton's yellow thatch.

"That's all right, Baby doll," Ruby replies. "He can play. Listen. He's a real one."

For Ricorton has started now, and the score is unrolling beneath his facile fingers. No, there is not much doubt about it—Ricorton is a real one.

The small, pale young man, with an ugly trick of speaking from the corner of his mouth, whom they all call Hagaman, springs up from beside a puffy-faced gentleman, and stops him.

"You will do," he says quickly. "Let's start them on the show."

He means play it all for them, while somebody explains the stage business. George Matson, an old hand at this game, in spite of his youthful, immaculate look, will do this to-day. Indeed, it seems to S. Sydney Tappan, as he watches, that Matson and Hagaman, the agent, leave very little for the puffy-faced gentleman, who sits in the only armchair, to say.

He is Thompson, "the angel," with little puffs from last night's gayety beneath his eyes, his gaze fixed, now, for the most part, upon Ruby. There is not much money in vaudeville so far, but there are a great many attractive girls with whom one is thrown quite informally. Our Mr. Thompson is endeavouring for once, however, to put the allurements of the fair sex from his mind. He has thrown away most of his money upon Broadway, and if he is not to retire again to Pittsburgh must recoup himself. This "Honey-mooners" act must succeed. It is only habit asserting itself, when he gazes upon Ruby.

Thousands, these vanishing, reappearing figures on Broadway of which our Mr. Thompson is one; coming from the great inland continent that stretches from Montreal to Galveston, retiring again, after a short space, to their theatres in Williamsport, their iron

furnaces in Muskegon, their wheat lands in the Red River Valley, their mines in Cripple Creek, their stores in Salt Lake City; gamblers mostly, some serious, vicious, the majority weak—all victims sooner or later of the lights of the sex drama of Broadway; the smell of perfume and of powder bringing up to them for a lifetime the vision of New York at night. From them the Hagamans of the theatrical buildings derive their living, and the Matsons fill in their vacant time from staging real productions.

Our Mr. Thompson has little money now; so little that he does not care to think of the time when it will be necessary to secure the costumes and scenery he has ordered—when, too, the people he has hired will begin to ask for advances on their salaries, so that they may live.

No money in their pockets ever, these under Thespians, these inconsequential chorus girls of widely varying types; some with the hard look and manner of the burlesque queens they have supported; some with earnest eyes and poor voices, and a great desire to make enough money to justify their choice of a livelihood, with, perhaps, enough over to send much-needed assistance to a home in Vermont or Indiana; others, with the inviting eyes and enticing manners which betray their characters; still others with rouged lips and powdered cheeks, and memories of midnight suppers in cafés in St. Louis and in Cleveland, of college youths and brokers, and a first-class show by Herbert or Friml—newspaper chorus girls, these last, the chorus girls of the cheap paragrapher; by far in the minority, however, in the actual life of the stage. No money ever in the pockets of these chorus men either; these express clerks with voices; youths from the ribbon counters, possessing good looks of a type; serious students of the voice, desirous of experience; and once in a while that professional chorus type—the ne'er-do-well who loves the vagabond life of the under Thespian.

Our Mr. Thompson does not fear these credulous

beings, however, these people willing to be hired by any chance bystander who has sufficient courage to ask them. He only fears lest his money give out before the first tryout weeks are over—weeks when, he knows from past experience, he will not make expenses. The graft of the booking offices must first be paid; and a fine show, playing at starvation wages in certain favoured theatres, is the first part of the graft.

Thompson realizes this as he turns away from Ruby's slender ankles to devote himself to the business in hand. He must save his money, and rush this show through to a success. This new musical director completes the company now, once more—provided that he knows his business, and does not disappoint as the ones before him have done. But Ricorton is of different stuff than his predecessors. You need not fear that he will not work, Mr. Thompson!

It is when the rehearsal is over that Ricorton introduces S. Sydney Tappan to them all. S. Sydney Tappan, author and playwright!

As Sammy thus makes his first bow to New York, I think he is trying to decide just how much importance he may safely take to himself. It was fortunate for him that he decided in that moment that the truth would never do. New York listens only to those who shout.

Matson is talking to him now.

"What line of stuff?" he asks, half interested. Every new playwright may some day have a piece upon the boards, and whipping pieces of all kinds into shape is his livelihood.

It was then that S. Sydney Tappan decided.

"Plays," he says easily. The moment he has said it, he wonders how he could ever have considered saying anything else. How simple, this pose as a playwright! New York is large. Well—and he is one—of a kind, too.

"Any one-act plays for vaudeville?" queries Haganman.

It occurs to our Sammy that this may be an order. He will lose no opportunity.

"Oh, a couple," he replies carelessly.

Hagaman takes out a card, and scribbles on it.

"Tremaine is looking for one," he says. "She wants a little tour on the big time, on the strength of 'The Betrayer.'"

The big time! Oh, yes, he means the circuit of large vaudeville theatres which can offer good salaries. Dimly, too, Sammy remembers this name on the card. Sylvia Tremaine. A well-known actress, and a successful play. Here is a chance, indeed!

"I will look her up, if I have time," he answers easily. How the part of the great man fits him! It is the hero, grown older.

Rehearsal is not again until two o'clock, so he and Ricorton go out for luncheon.

"Did you notice the girl with the gray eyes, Tappy?" asks Ricorton, trying to be casual, as they go down Forty-second Street.

"You mean Ruby?" Sammy replies. Yes, he has noticed her.

"She rather gets to me, Tappy," Ricorton confesses, a little shamefacedly. "I could stand having her around—though that Jack affair seems to think she is his preserve."

Sammy is silent. Ruby is attractive, he can see, in her way, but in his mind is the image of Carrie, back in Melchester, and the comparison does Ruby little credit.

Ricorton, however, is not the only one who has found attractive new acquaintances. Ruby, too, has taken a great liking to the tall young man with the sensitive face and thatchlike hair. He does not look her over in that way that still makes her shrink in spite of six years' experience in musical comedy. He reminds her of the people with whom she once went to high school up in Utica, and whom she still meets once in a great while, when she runs back to see her mother in the millinery department of one of the stores.

That is why, when he asks her, that afternoon, to go for dinner with himself and Tappy, she does not refuse. A free and easy world, this theatrical New York, with less vice than show of it. She likes Ricorton, the new musical director, and his silent friend—Sammy does not wish to break that great man illusion by ignorant remarks!—so why should she not go?

"How did you get in on this affair?" asks Ricorton, as they begin the soup of a sixty-cent table d'hôte.

"Me?" replies Ruby calmly, fixing her gray eyes on him. "Oh, Matson dropped me a card. It's low-brow stuff, and ought to get over. No more of that tall-dome drama for mine. High and dry, twice now. The last time in Lafayette, Indiana. The college boys got us to Fort Wayne and the Erie, gosh, that Erie! It must go to China on its way to New York. You wake up in the morning and you're farther off from the bright lights than ever."

"Who is this Thompson?" asks Sammy.

"You've got me," she answers. "Looks like a chicken chaser to me. The backwoods for his if he doesn't give himself a vacation. Those eyes!"

This girl is free and easy, with the laxity that the stage imparts, but her eye is clear. S. Sydney Tappan sees, and she knows her mind. It is a new type to him. Inwardly, he marvels over the heedlessness with which she will go out on the road in this show whose backer she does not know at all. Her self-possession, also, is new to him. How does it happen he has never heard of her in any of those musical shows which have gone through Melchester? Her voice, he remembers from the afternoon, is quite good, very nearly fine. He can judge that instinctively, with the unconscious knowledge those musical evenings of his early life in Paris and Melchester have given him.

But she has turned to Ricorton, now.

"I am glad you're going," she says frankly, "instead of that last one they had. The little French pig! Where he got his recommend from is a mystery to me."

Sammy is filled with a curiosity to know the history of this girl.

"Where did you study?" he asks.

She looks at him with a puzzled expression.

"Study?" she repeats. "Why, I haven't studied since I left Utica, I guess. I don't want anybody monkeying with my vocal chords. Why?"

"Why, you've got a good voice, that is all. I wondered who trained it," replies Sammy.

She stares at him a moment half in doubt.

"Don't try to kid me," she says, then. "Thank God, it stays with me."

"I wasn't kidding," our Sammy replies seriously. "I meant it."

She stares at him a second, still puzzled. Then she gives a little laugh.

"We'll let it pass this time," she says. He has meant it, after all. She turns to Ricorton.

"I like your friend," she cries.

"Oh, he's taken already," Ricorton replies with a smile.

Ruby looks at Sammy with an expression of frank friendship.

"You tell her, for me, she better come and rope you before somebody else snatches you up."

It was the only time, I think, that Carrie's existence was brought to Ruby's attention, until the end. I have always liked to think that she promptly forgot it.

Ricorton, however, has no Carrie back in Melchester, and the gay laughter and clear voice of this girl brighten his gray world as it has not been brightened since he left Maine. He realized, even then, how attractive she was to him. It was partly her mere physical presence that stirred him so, as he noticed the dainty tendrils of her hair, the velvet softness of her cheeks; but beyond all pulse of passion there was the feeling of frank, spontaneous companionship which she exuded like a perfume.

She is not exotic, this young actress; in spite of

nights of paint and powder, she gives an indefinable impression of health and warm blood. In the sparkling eyes, however, there is just a hint of temperament, perhaps of moods, which betrays the reason for her choice of a profession. One hundred dollars a week is her price, and vaudeville is easier than comic opera. That is why she is in "The Honeymooners." As for the backing of the piece, she is philosophical. If it is not a success, she will be left in the lurch anyway—so it is up to her to put it over in so far as she is able. No life for weaklings, this theatrical existence!

How far away, how almost nebulous seem the substantial houses of Melchester, the stores of Mr. Schroeder, that past world of society to our Sammy, as he sits thus in that lower New York café! They might be two spheres with all space in between, as well as two cities and two modes of life. Does Ricorton feel it, he wonders, as he looks at his friend and sees the look of gayety in his blue eyes?

It is Bohemia which our Sammy sees in the musician's blue eyes, however. Bohemia! That vision of the future vouchsafed to the poor in pocket and spreading its magic filaments over the sordid present! One must have a vision, and spend one's life blood upon its realization, to properly enter into Bohemia. It is the palette from which the dirty houses are so finely gilded. As an accident can be a jest, so poverty becomes Bohemia. The immortal point of view!

This is why Ricorton seems so happy to-night. He is in his element. But our Sammy is realizing that first stab of loneliness for Carrie, which is to grow to such proportions. Our lives are filled with hope. It is what keeps us from realizing the drama of our existence. The edge is taken from our souls, at the dramatic moment, by our everlasting hope, and it is all that keeps the tears from our Sammy's eyes as he sits and sips his wine. It will not be long now, he thinks, before he can return to Carrie as the conquering hero.

He is not aware that the five hundred dollars, which

he is cannily apportioning so that it will last until he has become famous, will be in serious danger soon. How futile most human plans become when the hour for action strikes! That five hundred which he is hoarding is about to take part in a direct assault upon the theatrical battlements.

It is two weeks later that the blow falls upon the little band of Thespians who are rehearsing in Lyric Hall. Our friend Mr. Thompson has departed upon the night train for Pittsburgh, washing his hands thus finally of "The Honeymooners"; leaving the act in its third week of rehearsal, with scenery and costumes ready, and even the tryout nights arranged for down on Fourteenth Street, where the audience knows the least, and so is hardest to please. Mr. Thompson has not been able to stand the strain. He has fled while there yet is time.

Ricorton seizes on the possibilities at once.

"The girls' shoes on Sixth Avenue are all we have got to get," he says excitedly to Sammy, at the restaurant on Forty-second Street. "The hauling of the scenery, enough extra to pay the losses on the tryout time, and then—if we got good booking, we would make some money!"

In Sammy's mind there is a slight recollection of that magnificent profit he once figured out in plumbing.

"Yes, if!" he answers gloomily.

But Ricorton is all enthusiasm now.

"It is a good show," he replies. "Hagaman and Matson both say so. All it needs is somebody behind it with good nerve and push."

Nerve and push seem consonant, someway, with the rôle of hero.

"We've got that all right!" replies Sammy. He is beginning to get excited, himself, at the prospect of thus breaking into the theatrical game so early.

"Five hundred dollars will more than see it through," cries Ricorton.

His lunch is quite untasted. He sees himself, in

several years, taking only first nights for himself, and sending out great comic-opera orchestras from New York the balance of the time. Somewhere inside him, too, is a perfect confidence in S. Sydney Tappan's ability to do all the rest that goes to staging and producing big shows. Tappy is a genius, and Ricorton will bank his life upon the statement.

"I don't need salary," he cries again. "We'll take the thing out just as it stands, and if it makes a hit, we'll send Thompson a check for what he has put in it. It is us or nothing, that's why. Two days and this crowd he has working in it will scatter to a dozen different shows."

His enthusiasm has communicated itself to Sammy, completely, before luncheon is over. The fate of the five hundred dollars is sealed.

Thus it is that S. Sydney Tappan steps into Lyric Hall the next day, and announces that he has taken over "The Honeymooners" from Mr. Thompson. He has been in the hall almost daily, and the change seems perfectly natural. I do not think that the Thespians ever even gave the thing a thought. They work in acts, but do not purchase them.

With Hagaman's assistance there is no difficulty with the costumes or scenery, save that the backdrop costs fifty dollars more than was estimated. Our Sammy, however, has learned from Mr. Pike to pay out checks without a quaver, so once he has made up his mind, he does not hesitate. He is started now on this, with the finished plumbing business and an opera complete behind him; and he will carry this thing through. He writes:

"Carrie, dearest, perhaps you will think that we are crazy——"
He knew, of course, though, that she would not!

"but we have taken over the operetta complete, now, and I am the producer, and Ric the conductor. It is the chance of a lifetime. We are going to try it out down on Fourteenth Street, and then on the big time. If only it is a success! I am so busy, these days, that I can hardly get time to write you anything but notes—there are so

many fine edges to be put on the business of the different parts. Hagaman is going to bring Willis of the Fifth Avenue Theatre down to the dress rehearsal. I think the booking will be easy. We have a lead who is very fine. I wish you could meet her. She is different from any one I ever knew—Ruby Williams is her name. She will stick to the end, even if half salary becomes necessary. I am sorry to have to go—I have no time to tell you how much I am always thinking of you—but I am! Yours,

“SAMMY.

“P.S. I have a chance, also, to write a playlet for Sylvia Tremaine, the ‘Betrayed’ star. I have an appointment with her next week. Needless to state, I will have to persuade her that I can do it before it will mean much.”

I think Carrie could wish for a little more of Sammy, a little more of their love in his letter—but he is busy, of course—perhaps is winning at last. It almost sounds as if he were getting on finely in New York, she thinks, with a little catch in her throat for his success. He ought to have won from the very beginning, he is so much more gifted than the others. He deserves all that he can get.

She sends him a telegram, also, on the night of “The Honeymooners” tryout at the City Theatre on Fourteenth Street—a telegram of love and congratulation. She would have given all she possessed to have been there herself.

That night at the City Theatre! There were few other nights in S. Sydney Tappan’s experience which stood out more vividly.

To the stolid audience which filled the theatre, I suppose the show was much the same. For Ricorton and our Sammy, however, it was a night of mystery, suspense, and nervousness.

Our Sammy has just forty-two dollars in the world as he stands back of the wings, talking, with a semblance of lightness, to the chorus girls and men who are crowding around him for their last instructions. No rehearsal for “The Honeymooners” this morning; there are too many acts on the bill this week, and the pianist and leader is disgruntled. A lightning change lady artist is

singing character songs ahead of them, her limited time preventing her from seeking the dressing-room below the stairs. Her last change will be the signal for their act to gather, S. Sydney Tappan is aware; and does not realize that he is staring eagerly at her, as she tears off her Spanish dress, and plunges into black tights.

"Fresh guy!" she mutters, as she runs out upon the stage again, and starts her last song.

It is the signal!

"Honeymooners," calls the red-faced man. "Next!"

Down in the musicians' room, beneath the stage, Ricorton throws away his cigarette, and unrolls his score, as he walks through the little runway out into the pit, and smiles around upon the orchestra men. They have never read this music before, and he is dependent upon their favour. A wrong note by the violin or cornet, and Ruby's best song can be ruined.

"Regular stuff," he says easily. "Introduction, two four, then till ready, chorus twice—then the verse again, and straight through to the end!" It is his first experience, but he is a real musician, and knows that he can keep time. "Watch my head for the cues—down she goes, then start."

They nod wearily. He does not waste time talking, like so many of these dubs from the legit who think they know it all. And he will play the piano, and give them some support, instead of beating with a stick. Enough said—it is quarter of ten now, and three acts yet to come.

It is as the music starts, and Sammy throws the lights, red for the curtain, changing then to yellow overcast by violet from the balcony, until the spotlight comes into play upon the duet—it is then that he should be thrilled and his heart stand in his mouth. But he is too occupied with cues, and pushing Jack Bantry on stage, while Ricorton, down in the pit, pounds G sharp a dozen times for his appearance, to feel anything. Almost before he knows it, the final chorus is being sung, while the stage manager rages because the act has

run twenty-nine minutes instead of twenty-two—although the curtain has risen again upon it with actual waves of applause and stamps of approval from the gallery, and the act has gotten across “big!” It has gotten across because it is just cheap enough, and because Ruby’s charms have captivated most of the men, while Ricorton has held the thing together from the pit. Those rounds of applause mean bookings.

Hagaman meets S. Sydney Tappan at the stage door, with Ricorton.

“Immense!” he says. “Three days at the New York, then Patterson and Brighton Beach, and then Keith or the Orpheum. We’ll have the rest of the booking agents over at the New York, including the Big Robber. Boys, she is going to do business!”

They will break even for two weeks, Hagaman figures, and then, unless all signs fail, the profit will be about two hundred and fifty dollars a week.

One hundred and twenty-five dollars apiece, Sammy and Ricorton figure at the Kaiser Hof that night at midnight, with Ruby, flushed with excitement and relief, seated opposite.

“I’ve got fifty dollars,” she says excitedly. “We’ll live on that for two weeks, along with what Tappy’s got!”

She means it, does Ruby. She is as glad for their success as they are. I wonder what they would have ever done without her fifty dollars?

It is two weeks later that S. Sydney Tappan climbs the stairs to the West Twenty-ninth Street room, to find two letters beneath the door—one in the familiar handwriting of Carrie, the other a straight large scroll which dwarfs the violet envelope it covers.

Who is it from, he wonders, as he looks out over the line of tenements that back up against his window, their outline plain against the night sky, their rear windows lighted here and there, making glowing patches in the inky blackness between the buildings.

He is alone to-night, and just back from the station

where he has said good-bye to Ricorton and Ruby and the honeymooners. They have gone upon the Orpheum circuit and left him to look after the business end in Long Acre Square. It is very silent in this room, he realizes, as he lights the gas, and the black night and tenements vanish as if by magic, while the cracked mirror and cheap beds spring into view. Nearly as silent as Washington Avenue after midnight, he thinks, when the street lamps shine upon the pavement beneath the elms; as silent as the campus in Williamstown after the chapel clock has boomed the stroke of one, and the last car to North Adams has gone shrieking down the wooded New England road; as silent as the front room on Hawthorne Street of a Sunday afternoon, with old Mr. Tappan asleep in the morris chair, the old cat upon his knee; as silent as Paris out in Auteuil, overlooking the convent gardens, when the last theatre-goers have come home from the Opera, and the leaves sigh in the night breeze.

He opens Carrie's letter first. He reads:

"Sammy, dearest, I am all excited about the wonderful success of 'The Honeymooners,' excited and so pleased, pleased, pleased! It hardly seems possible that it can be true. And yet I always knew you would succeed, so I am not surprised. I can only say, I told you so—and ask, when are you coming home to see me? There are so many things I want to talk to you about—and letters are so queer and unsatisfactory. It doesn't seem as if we had had a real talk in ages. I want to see you, and touch you, too, and make sure you are real, again. This is such a lonely way to live, isn't it? Write and tell me when you are coming!

"You will be grieved to hear that you are no longer an object of interest to the family. They do not know what you are doing, and social work quite has the floor at 1200 Washington, now. If I could only tell you all about it! But I never could, in a letter. Father thinks because I have so much is the best reason why I should not care about doing anything for others. He is very angry at me just now. The latest thing! as mother calls it—as if it were some kind of a disease that broke out on me. It is because I sold my electric and sent the money to Mrs. Lewis. I cannot see, however, why they should be so furious when it was really mine. They seem to think that the things they give me are theirs just the same as if they had not been given to me at all. Father says now

he will never give me anything again—I don't know enough to have things. I would have liked to tell him that I am the one who has to walk, not he! I would suggest it, if I dared——

"You don't know how strange it seems without you here any more. I shall be so glad when we can do everything together. It makes me feel quite mean sometimes, down at the settlement, to realize that I have you and am so happy, when so many people are miserable. I cannot help feeling that life is not fair at all.

"I cannot wait, now, to have you come home. I cannot tell you how it makes me feel to know that I am sure, at least, of you! There are no dark secrets for us to stumble over, anyway. When are you coming? With all my love,

"Your own

"CARRIE"

A long time he sits with the letter in his hand. Carrie—she sounds quite serious, nowadays. And yet, he can still see little traces of that old sense of humour. It has always been like the rest of her—rather simple, and straightforward. If only he can go home soon. Melchester—yes, it still is home, though he cannot say why. Well, perhaps he can go soon now, as soon as the booking of "The Honeymooners" is more complete.

But he cannot go home for a few days yet, I fear—days which will lengthen into months before he knows it; and when he does, things will not be as they have been till now. Truly, life is a going on, wherefore it is better for those who love to go on together, lest their paths diverge. He will know that he cannot go when he opens the violet letter.

It is from Miss Sylvia Tremaine, requesting him to call and see her to-morrow, instead of next week. She wants a playlet, and wants it quickly!

CHAPTER IX

IN WHICH SAMMY CHANGES HIS SPOTS, AND GOES HOME TO SHOW THEM

ENVIRONMENT, so the scientists have been telling us for these many years, controls life to a great extent. The same thing, so the psychologists assure us, affects the growth of human character. Heredity is losing its place as Exhibit A, and environment usurping its position in the catalogue of excuses.

If this is so, it is no wonder that morality is a good deal a matter of acquaintance with the neighbours. Where all are strangers, morals are at a low ebb. Character runs wild, so to speak, and it is only the unusual person who can keep his course. This is the danger of our huge cities to the human animal and his character.

It is also the explanation of that puzzle which has been the cause of so much endless speculation: how could the man who later wrote "Doctor Paulding" ever have been the author of "The Lady in the Lion Skin?" Well, the mind which has the dramatic quality must necessarily possess the chameleon's ability to change its spots. New York and Sylvia Tremaine first changed Sammy's.

Let us look in at Sylvia Tremaine's apartment, on Thirty-fourth Street, and see the first faint evidence of the changing colours.

S. Sydney Tappan looks quite different than when we saw him two months ago, though in just what way it would be difficult to say. Two months of good income from "The Honeymooners," these; two months passed in almost daily expectation of a return to Melchester and Carrie, but with that dream still unrealized.



“Godfrey! . . . what a part! *The Lady in the Lion Skin, eh?*”

The business is a risky and uncertain one, and Miss Tremaine's desire for a playlet must be satisfied immediately, or she will secure some one else, and the opportunity will be lost. "The Honeymooners" cannot last forever, and this has been Sammy's first chance to break into the game of playwriting.

So he has stayed on and written at white heat, so that the dramatic actress of "Betrayal" fame will take his work. Just enough experience in vaudeville, now, to enable him to do it. Dramatic, and quick! Experience has tempered his talent. And the twenty-minute sketch of the plain young girl whom the devil tempts with his offer of beauty—his only condition a box of pills from which she must eat one each day, with the knowledge, however, that among the thousands there is a poisoned one—has been a great hit.

The ability of Sylvia Tremaine for character acting is shown at the different stages of the girl's career as a famous beauty; and rises to its climax when, old and beautiful no longer, she has but two pills left and must choose, with the knowledge that one of them is poisoned and means death—only to find, when all is done, that there has been no poisoned pill at all! The whole horror of death, which has ruined her outwardly successful life, a grim jest of the devil's.

Miss Tremaine has scored heavily with it, and as he sits in her drawing-room this morning, our Sammy has been called into consultation regarding a three-act play for her, to be put on when her vaudeville engagement is ended. I think the actress, perhaps, has more than half an idea that she has made a distinct "find" in S. Sydney Tappan.

Radiant in a negligée which shows off her bronze hair, brilliant with health, and emphasizes her clear, fine complexion fading into pure white at her throat and arms, Sylvia Tremaine is sitting opposite him, across the hearth, curled up on a sofa, her brown, silken ankles visible above the bronzed slippers which harmonize with her costume.

Vaudeville necessitates morning calls, and it is eleven-thirty.

"A part like—like an enchantress," she is saying, putting her hands behind her head, the sleeves falling away and revealing the beauty of the arms. "An enchantress who enslaves men, fascinates, bewitches them, makes them lose their souls."

She is at the age, this woman, when she realizes her charms to the full, and is resolved to take advantage of them in her profession.

"Why, Elsie Borden has only a back—and she is making a fortune out of that in comic opera! I ought to put Elsie in the shade."

"You should, indeed," agrees Sammy sincerely. She is a beautiful woman, and the world knows it.

She looks at him a trifle suspiciously, however.

"No sarcasm, Sydney," she warns him.

He is a handsome youth, this Sydney Tappan, only about twenty-six, yet she is not always certain that he is not making fun of her. He is not very impressionable to feminine charm, she fears.

"New York is different from the rest of the country," she says slowly. "New York must be shocked, must have its breath taken away. I want to be daring, oh, not vulgar—I want to suggest, well—the unutterable, and yet suggest it entrancingly, so that women will be thrilled in spite of themselves and men come to see my play a dozen times. Do you think you can do it?"

Sammy stares into the fire. He is not quite certain what she means, nor how he can produce this effect for which she is asking. He has never considered the theatre in exactly this light before.

Sylvia stands upright.

"See!" she cries, casting off her negligée, "I am dressed exactly as much as for a ball. Yet how daring the effect of the white lingerie! And not an inch of me showing that a ball dress would not show! Suggestion, Sydney. That is what I mean. That is New York. That is theatrical success here. Take it another way."

See my lion skin rug here. Supposing I should pin up my skirt—say, fashionable length, and throw this rug on my shoulders!”

With a little movement she cast the lion skin about her.

“See the effect!” she says. “Even you would gasp if I should cast away the skin! You can hardly believe that I am quite fully dressed all the while. Get that in literature, Sydney, in a play for me, and you are made in New York.”

Sammy nods his head rapidly.

“Yes,” he says thoughtfully. “That is New York right enough. I can see it in the streets, in the plays, in the literature for sale.”

“Exactly!” cries Sylvia. “Get in my play what some of the novelists have gotten in their society novels, and we can storm New York.”

“With an idea in it, however,” says Sammy excitedly. He sees what she means, now. “Done artistically from the right point of view, with a fine idea back of the drama to excuse it, and make it palatable.”

It is the artist in him struggling. But Sylvia makes a little face.

“Why, the idea itself—it must be—why, it must be quite unutterable, so that the cafés can make little faces whenever my play is mentioned!” she cries.

I think her visualization of fame in the cafés of New York quells that artist of a few seconds before in S. Sydney Tappan.

“I see, I see!” he admits, tramping up and down the room, then stopping suddenly. “But the rest of the country?”

“New York first!” says Sylvia contemptuously. “The provinces as a matter of course!”

It is while Sammy is thinking that she bursts out again, a moment later.

“A woman is the devil, Sydney!” she cries. “Think of the trouble she can cause, if she realizes her power over the susceptibility of men. That is New York—sex

appeal capitalized in a thousand ways! Give me the part of a woman with a devilish desire to flirt, and make monkeys out of the men she meets—never seeing, in her conceit, that others can play at the same game, and that each conquest she makes soils her also; until, when she finally falls in love, the man's sense of delicacy—call it what you will—is revolted, and he goes away and leaves her stranded at the last! Let me gradually become less beautiful, more sensual, as I go on, until in the last act I am what my soul has always been, a beast of prey!”

“Godfrey!” exclaims Sammy, thrilled with the possibilities. “What a part! With a plot thrown in for good measure. The Lady in the Lion Skin, eh?”

Sylvia's eyes shine.

“Splendid!” she cries. “I'll help you on her conquests, Sydney—if you find you need any.”

She springs up enthusiastically.

“A flirt even to my own butler! No one too low for me to stoop to, at the last!”

“Magnificently horrible!” shudders Sammy pleasantly.

“And yet,” she continues, stretching out her arms to him, “on the outside so tender, so appealing, so alluring that no one can resist liking me, no man withstand my advances!”

I have always thought it was the doorbell which saved our Sammy that morning. He had almost forgotten, by that time, that she was acting, showing him his new heroine, in lingerie.

“Mrs. Grundy!” she exclaims, scrambling into her neglected negligée. “What a scandal there will be if some one sees me! That I am showing you our heroine—not for Dame Scandal!”

She laughs, as S. Sydney Tappan recovers his control. What a fool he is, he thinks!

“I wouldn't be Hartmann for a million!” he says humorously. Hartmann is her leading man, usually. “I couldn't stand the strain!”

She laughs.

"It is quite different, with two thousand people looking on," she answers.

Is there a girl at home, she wonders? Probably. There usually is.

I think she sighs a little as S. Sydney Tappan takes his leave from the apartment on Thirty-fourth Street that noon. A clever woman, Sylvia Tremaine, with eyes to see with and but one God, applause. This young fellow has the ability, she is certain, to construct for her a vehicle which will fit her ability like the paper on the wall. It is her part to see that over the construction is cast the glamour of suggestion, the little trick of double meaning which will make the piece a delicate wisp of diablerie, with always a daring reality beneath. What a fool she is, to wish, even for a moment, that she herself could be again some one's "girl at home."

Our Sammy's spots are visibly different as he goes down the street. They are taking on the hue of New York's atmosphere, as interpreted by Sylvia Tremaine—interpreted, perhaps, correctly, too. I am quite certain he would never have written a "Lady in the Lion Skin," had his life been confined to Melchester. Perhaps it is only another manifestation, however, of the power of the lodestone of success. He must write plays to make money; that is the prime requisite. If he can make it by poisoning the mind of a nation—why, he is not far behind a great many of those to whom his world looks up! It is an irony, that, like S. Sydney Tappan, some of the greatest of our varied successes are but handing us the pistol.

I wonder, however, does our Sammy realize, to-day, that these steps he is taking are leading him, for the first time, a little away from that path which he and Carrie have trod so far together? S. Sydney Tappan is not quite the same as when he first came to New York a few months ago. . . .

Carrie's letters, too, seemed to be altering during

these months, reflecting the changes in her mind. She was growing older. She wrote:

"Sammy, dearest, I have become a real volunteer worker in the Settlement! It is so much the most important thing that has happened to me in some time that I feel that I must write and tell you about it. It is just a house, of course, but so intensely interesting! It is real life, I think. If I could only be like Mrs. Lewis I should die happy. I cannot imagine why father and mother do not see the romance and bravery of her life.

"I tried to tell father about it all, but he just laughs at me. He thinks it is all quite silly. I think he only sees the small side of the great work the Settlements are doing. All that he sees is a few girls teaching foreign women our ways of housekeeping, and sewing, and dressmaking. I wonder doesn't he realize that they all have children, too? He says they can all live on greens and old bread, and don't need much wages now, but if we fool women keep on we'll get them all dissatisfied.

"I think I really like it so much because it isn't charity. It seems to me like really helping them. At home, it is just the same as it has always been with everything I have ever wanted to do. I am afraid we will never understand each other. It is one reason why I am so glad that I have you to believe in—and to understand me.

"The family are beginning to wonder again if everything is over between you and me, after all. The news of some of your success has gotten to town, wonderfully mangled and garbled, of course, but still recognizable as success. I do not think, however, they are ever going to say anything more. I am so glad that I could earn my own living in the Settlement if necessary. Mrs. Lewis told me yesterday she would always take me if I would come. You have no idea how differently it makes me, or any girl, feel. It just makes nobodys out of us, to have to sell our characters for food and dress.

"I am holding my thumbs waiting to hear how you are coming out with the play for Miss Tremaine. I wish so much she had played the devil sketch through here, instead of just in New York. I would like so much to have seen it—the S. Sydney Tappan, author, on the programme, must have been grand!

"I realize how much it means for both of us that you stay on in New York until you have made a little place for yourself in the theatrical world. You don't know how thrilling it is to me to know that you are succeeding. If only you could get Miss Tremaine's first night here in Melncester!

"It seems ages since I have seen you. I know I should be thankful for your success, and yet—the future cannot always

console us, can it? I wonder will you like me as well as ever when you do come home! Still, there are no frightful changes. I think I have gained a pound!

"Always your
"CARRIE."

A week later she wrote him again:

"I am so glad you have been put up at the Lambs' Club! That Mr. Hartmann must be very nice. It will be a great help, I suppose, knowing all those people. I know there is a great person in you some place, Sammy, and perhaps this is the beginning. I only hope I can be worthy of you, and be the kind of wife a man in your position should have. How much depends upon the woman! I can see it every day in Melchester. I think, too, I am beginning to hate material things. I can almost see you smile. We will never have much to hate, I suppose! I can't help it. It seems as if it were plainer to me every day that a common ideal, and aspiration, is the only thing worth striving for—all the rest just a means of filling up unhappy hours.

"I am consumed with curiosity to know how father and mother will act when you come to call! A sense of humour—they haven't it, I am afraid, and for that reason, I suppose, dread the day.

"But I don't!

"Please, it will be very soon now, won't it?

"CARRIE.

"P. S. Freddie Halton is still calling on me at impossible hours, though I have told him frankly about you, and what you mean to me. I can't refuse to see him, however—can you imagine the fuss if I did! They say Dorothy and Asa are engaged, too, but I am not sure. She has been on the verge with so many! I wonder, am I mean?"

It is six weeks after the finished draft of the *Lady in the Lion Skin* has been taken to the apartment on Thirty-fourth Street that S. Sydney Tappan calls for Sylvia Tremaine to take her to luncheon at the Ritz. All the good effect of that lesson in plumbing appears to have been wasted if we can judge by the confidence with which he steps into the elevator this November morning. Has this gentleman in the correct tailor-made suit ever made a mistake?

There is one good result, however, though it is not visible upon the surface. He has written and finished completely in three months a play in three acts. S.

Sydney Tappan has not stepped out of his room during all that time, except to consult Miss Tremaine. He has not even had time in which to move. Ricorton's valises still repose in the far corner of the Twenty-ninth Street room, and the Tappan trunk still hides in the closet. New York calls her favourites in terms that admit of no dallying by the way.

To-day, however, he knows that the strain is over so far as the actual writing goes. The play has emerged and is good. Rehearsal is going on, and daily lunch at the Lambs' Club is a usual thing. Whatever Sylvia Tremaine chooses her managers know will succeed; so, beyond giving their approval, Mr. Friedman, the working director, has had little to say. He has read all the play in the first draft, and, with the exception of Hartmann, has chosen the cast. Miss Tremaine will do all the rest. She will open as usual on December 1st, at the Players' Theatre, just off Broadway, although the try-outs are not yet arranged.

This is one of the things on S. Sydney Tappan's mind as he waits for Sylvia to appear. She does not keep him waiting long.

"Where shall we lunch, Tappy?" she asks gayly, as she comes from her room. She is a radiant vision in dark-blue silk, with two old-fashioned wide stripes down the front of her dress, and on her hair some kind of a velvet creation.

"The Ritz," says Sammy. She is one of the most ravishing women he has ever seen.

"Beautiful Tappy!" she cries, clapping her hands. "Your tie is a triumph!" She seems to have preserved, miraculously, the enthusiasm of youth.

"I should have torn it off in the face of all Fifth Avenue, had it offended," replies Sammy gallantly.

He is experiencing a certain very pleasurable sensation in thus escorting this beautiful woman to the Ritz, where he knows all eyes will be turned enviously upon him. Sylvia Tremaine is, perhaps, the most widely known woman in New York this season.

"Are you prepared to make love to me all through luncheon, Tappy?" she says in the taxi. "You are such a poor victim that I am afraid you won't show it. That is the first rule, when you lunch with me at the Ritz; gaze adoringly into my eyes! All my playwrights have fallen in love with me, and I know Friedy's press agent isn't disposed to let you off!"

"I don't care to be let off," replies Sammy lightly. "I look on you as a liberal dramatic education. If it were not for my innate politeness I would keep out my notebook all the time you talk!"

"Oh, but you can't mean that!" she cries reproachfully. "I never use my friends."

"You mean, you don't admit it," he answers. "What emotion, for instance, are you trying out on me just now, with the trembling lip and tragic eye?"

"Why, reproach, of course!" she says tragically. "Didn't you ever make faces for amusement, when you were a child?"

"I have heard," says Sammy cruelly, "that they put lines in your face."

"Oh, oh!" she cries. "Mean Tappy! I don't look twenty-five."

He considers her seriously.

"No," he says, "you don't!"

"And I am not fat! See my ankle, Tappy! It doesn't bulge." She shudders. "I won't be thirty and podgy!"

"You will be very thin, really scrawny," answers Sammy slowly. "I can see you now—with difficulty, of course—playing old maid parts——"

"Now, you are really mean, Sydney," Sylvia says hotly. "I shall never play such parts. When I am fifty I shall do Diving Venus things, and entrance old drummers in clammy bathing suits!"

"Will the management let drummers in all wet?" Sammy murmurs.

She looks at him reproachfully.

"I never thought you would be guilty of that style of humour," she says dismally.

"I do it for exercise," answers Sammy.

"Please reserve it for some other time, then," she says. "They will certainly put you out of the Ritz if they hear you making such remarks."

"The chauffeur thinks you are crazy," remarks Sammy. "He has turned around twice, already. Once more, and he will dash our brains out on some one's front steps."

"He thinks I am adorable," she says modestly. "He as good as said so when I got in."

"They should have lady chauffeurs, anyway," suggests Sammy. "Then I, no doubt, would travel free."

"Your wife at the wheel?" murmurs Sylvia.

"Perhaps," says Sammy hardily.

Sylvia claps her hands.

"And all the babies inside!"

"It's better than walking!"

"Promise me, Sydney, you will never come to call on me with the babies!"

"You will beg for one to talk to when you are sixty," returns Sammy.

But Sylvia tosses her head. Perhaps she feels he is right.

"They will cry all through the last act," she says wickedly, "when you come to see me at the Players, and their faces will be very dirty. And you will see me inside Rector's as you drag them home, yelling, in the subway; all the way to the flat."

Sammy shakes his head.

"I shall never yell," he says.

Sylvia disregards him.

"The babies will."

"Not mine!"

"I can hear them," she says cruelly. "Some of them with grand opera lungs."

"I will bring them every night to the Players then," Sammy counters brightly. "A treat for everybody who does not like your play!"

It is as they alight and go into the Ritz that Sylvia refers to the subject again.

"It's the only place you still show your provincialism, Sydney," she says, then, half in earnest. "Those babies!"

"And it's the only place you have begun to show your worldliness," Sammy replies.

She looks him over carefully as they sit down.

"Otherwise, you are a real New Yorker."

"And you quite human," returns Sammy undaunted.

"I would like to see your Carrie," says Sylvia earnestly. "She must be some one quite unusual. Lasting love isn't found every day, Sydney. I wonder if you realize how lucky you are?"

Sammy glances at her keenly.

"Making fun?" he queries.

"Not at all, Sydney—oh! Make love to me instantly! Here are my gloves—a lingering look, yes, that's it!" She leans forward and whispers a little to him. "There he is—that is old Calder over there. He is always giving me a little sentimental puff. Millionaire from Spokane leaping from the Brooklyn Bridge at midnight all for love of the beautiful Sylvia Tremaine! And then a two-page article on famous idiots of history." She sighs. "I think the only way to get a real man, after thirty, is to break up some happy home."

"Please spare mine," says Sammy gayly.

He is very sure that he is about to have one.

"Perhaps I have seen too much of the world," Sylvia says seriously. "And I see only the awful consequences. The trouble is there are two parties to the thing, and it always seems as if one does not measure up when the test comes—and the test always does come. And then, unhappiness and disaster! Besides, some men and women should never marry. They have no stability. I might marry you to-day, and run off with Hartmann to-morrow. You have no idea how nice Hartmann is at times."

She contemplates Hartmann's attractions as they eat.

"Listen," says Sammy. "Do something for me, will you?"

"Anything, except those babies!" Sylvia smiles.

"Have the tryout night up in Melchester!"

Sylvia's face lights up.

"Before the girl and her stodgy old family and the old home knockers club! Splendid! We must arrange it, if possible, Sydney. Why, it will be better than the play."

She thinks a moment.

"There is no reason why we can't, unless the date is filled. I always draw in Melchester. And the stage man there is a dear! I love him. He weighs three hundred and ten. It's just like an inspiration to see him move himself around. Such will power and character! Honestly, Sydney, it's just like seeing Mohamet move that mountain."

Her eyes are sparkling. It appeals to her, this old home drama as she expresses it. It will start the play off in an interesting way. And then, too, the papers should be very kind indeed!

On the way back to the theatre, her mood changes.

"I am getting old, Sydney. I am beginning to play the fairy grandmother—or was it godmother? I don't know—but it is very sad, anyway."

"Nonsense," retorts Sammy. "Youth is just a point of view!"

"But you can't see that in your mirror," she says dolefully. "No, I am old and gray and playing the part of a disagreeable old harpy! Carrie will hate me—and then I can't see you any more."

Then she brightens.

"At least," she says gayly, "I won't have to see the babies in that case!"

And she runs into the theatre while Sammy dismisses the taxi.

Rehearsals are well along on the "Lady in the Lion

Skin," and every one in the cast is quite certain that it will be a success. Engagements with Sylvia Tremaine can almost be considered cash in advance; and, though they have never heard before of this S. Sydney Tappan, they are quite positive that he has caught, somehow, the peculiar touch which spells a Broadway success. There has been a great deal of changing, and some protests from the author, but Miss Tremaine has seemed to carry her point in most cases, so that the show moves along in good style, now.

To Sammy, it has all had the semblance of a dream, a figment of imagination. There are times when he cannot realize that it is really he who has this "Lady in the Lion Skin" in rehearsal—with a sure production, and success ahead. Unless something very unforeseen occurs, it can hardly help running for a season, once Friedman and the firm pass on it, and it goes out on the boards.

In the language of the stage director, it will knock 'em dead! Particularly the scene where the lady in the lion skin meets the man she loves, and after using all her wiles to lure him on, finally casts aside the lion skin—amidst the gasps of the audience—and steps forth in her Palm Beach bathing suit for a swim in the ocean outside the cottage. S. Sydney Tappan has written it so that the lady picks up the lion skin in full view of the audience, and it is, presumably, only the unfortunate gentleman upon the stage who is deceived.

It is just before the dress rehearsal, however, that Sylvia persuades him to change it, while he is waiting for her in her apartment.

"Oh, I have a wonderful idea for that lion skin scene, Sydney," she has called to him from her boudoir where she is dressing.

"What is that?" asks Sammy, idly turning the pages of a magazine, and looking at the pictures of theatrical celebrities. Will he be among them soon, he wonders?

"Wait," she says. "I will put on that bathing suit, and show you."

A moment later she is out, dragging the lion skin behind her.

"These bronze slippers don't add to the effect, do they?" she says, ruefully, gazing down at the slippers she has put on. "I suppose I will have to play it without them, though I hate the dust of the stage——"

"Good heavens!" says Sammy, aghast. "It is really going to be fierce."

It is the first time she has dressed this scene, and the effect of her low-cut bronze silk bathing suit is startling.

"This is the idea," she says. "Instead of picking up the skin as Fenwick comes in, and throwing it around me, like this"—and she suits the action to the word—"supposing we arrange it like this——"

Sammy is really startled. The shock now to an audience of this creature in the revealing bathing suit will be quite enough. What will she suggest to heighten it? But Sylvia does not notice, and goes on.

"Suppose, in the show, I have two of these bathing suits, one on, and the other in my hand. Suppose, too, this screen here is the Japanese screen in the cottage scene. I'll place it here beside the fireplace so that I can get behind it. You see what the inference will be, Sydney, as I come in with the other suit in my hand? Then, I go to the screen, and when I am behind it, I take the dressing gown like this——"

She walks behind the screen and hangs the morning gown over the top, while she looks out from one side.

"I am looking out now, on account of the noise of Fenwick at the door, at the same time giving the dressing gown enough push to make it fall on the floor outside, in view of the audience, where I can't get it without coming out—and the inference, of course, is that I just took it off before putting on my bathing suit, and so have nothing on at all. You see the idea? Then I reach out, like this——"

She reaches out toward the lion skin, and draws it slowly behind the screen beside the fireplace.

"Then Fenwick hears me, and comes slowly toward

me saying, hoarsely, 'Mimi!'—and I step out, and back a little, with the lion skin wrapped around me, too, like this——”

And Sylvia steps out from behind the screen with the lion skin wrapped around her, the delicate pallor of her smooth young shoulders above, below her slim ankles and feet, and across the lion skin her round white arms.

“You see, the inference is that I haven’t had time to put on the bathing suit at all, and just have the lion skin around me. Then as Fenwick says ‘Good God,’ and takes a step toward me, I tear away, and fling away the lion skin like this——”

She suits the action to the word.

“And stand staring haughtily at him, before I walk out to the beach. Won’t that be the last word, Sydney? See the possibilities! Just one gasp as I throw it away—and perfectly all right all the time. Isn’t that much better?”

She curls up on the sofa.

“It will be all right,” says Sammy still aghast. “If there is anybody left in the theatre to see it.”

“They’ll be crowding in the doors!” says Sylvia calmly. “This is what New York wants. Why, they’ll be disappointed because I even have on the bathing suit beneath.”

“Well,” says Sammy, “you might pretty near as well not, for all it leaves to the imagination.”

“Now, don’t be fussy, Sydney,” she answers. “It’s the latest thing from Altman’s, not one bit altered or different than you’ll see at all the beaches next summer. None of them have stockings, and this one is much better than lots of the others. It is your evil mind!”

Sammy reddens slightly. Sylvia claps her hands.

“Shall I make love to you, Sydney? In my bathing suit?”

“I’ll get my hat if you do,” retorts Sammy.

“Well,” she answers, “it is time we were going, anyway. That theatre! I am tired of it already, and

the season hasn't begun. And I suppose I am selling my privacy for money."

She stands before him with the dressing gown on her arm, in her eyes an odd look.

"When two hundred thousand people see me like this, it is no wonder that no one man wants me. But it is success, Sydney, success in New York for me! And for it, I sell them the sight of myself."

She laughs.

"Or, rather, the expectation of it. For they are stung, Sydney, stung! And I get success just the same."

And she goes off to dress. A clever woman, Sylvia Tremaine, though without any principle save that of succeeding. Her brains have kept her from sinking into the sensual mass of New York. Her head is level, and she knows enough to exploit her audiences without mercy or conscience. It is only now and then that uneasy doubt makes her conscience stir in its cocoon. A person of genius, Miss Tremaine, bent crooked by civilization since childhood. For her both Exhibits A and B can be summoned. Her parents were actors and she has been left to bring herself up in New York. The catalogue of excuses can be thus called into play.

There is but one regret in Sammy's mind as he packs his things the next afternoon on West Twenty-ninth Street. But it has nothing to do with Sylvia. It is for Ricorton.

"If Ric were only here to see the first night," he thinks. Ric! He feels for the absent musician the affection a soldier might have for his comrade of the campfires. Success seems to have crowned their efforts without a struggle so far. It hardly seems possible that so few months have passed; and Ricorton is already directing orchestras, and he himself is about to blossom forth as a playwright. The last rehearsal in New York is over, and the Company is leaving for Melchester on the midnight. Sylvia Tremaine has

gone already, so that she will not have to sleep upon a train, but can get her rest in the hotel at Melchester.

But Ricorton is far from Melchester and New York. His last letter has been from the Frederick Hotel in St. Paul, and he is leaving for the Coast trip on the Orpheum. He has written:

"Dear Tappy, have been having the one real time of my life. The trip, so far, could not have been better. I can see behind me only one long succession of splendid restaurants—ahead of me a vista of still more restaurants, all good! I am in my glory. I know you object to letters concerned principally with food, so I shall detail our feasts. I can only recommend to you, when you have made your million, to try that Chop Suey joint across from the hotel in Grand Rapids. When I am famous, I shall buy a hotel and do the cooking myself. It is an art.

"So far as business goes, things could not be better. Jack Bantry has been playing the gay Lothario a little too often but so far with no serious results. I should hate to lose him. His Irish voice certainly brings down the gallery. My only difficulty has been in keeping the peace between the rival artists that make up our chorus. I have decided more than once that only poisoning you could ever compensate me for the difficulties I have had with them. Do you realize you promised every single one of them the part of understudy to Ruby? I watch every mouthful she eats with the greatest concern. If she should fall ill for one night I verily believe there would be blood shed over who should take her part. You have no idea what a peach she really is. Travelling around the way we do gives you a mighty good measure of what a girl is really made of.

"I am prostrated with grief to think I can't see the first night of that play of yours—though from the name I should probably rush from the theatre, blushing, at the end of the second act. Please invite all that musical committee at the Dutch Reformed for me! If you get a chance, you might kick one or two of them as they go out the lobby.

"Sylvia Tremaine sounds very attractive. Financially, I guess, she is a sure thing. She will make it go if any one can. Here is hoping, anyhow, for the very best. Give my love to Carrie—and don't forget it! You have always been afraid to send it in those dull, midnight letters of yours. I wipe a silent tear just now—farewell.

Yours,
"Ric."

They have gone a long way since they came to New York a bare seven months ago, thinks Sammy, as he

gazes around the second-floor room. The mirror is just as cracked as ever, and the carpet as subtly cheerful, but somehow he has gotten used to them. The "Lady in the Lion Skin" was written here, and it seems a little bit like home. If it were only in Melchester, its imitation would be complete.

Melchester! It seems like contemplating a continuation of that old dream, to realize that he is packing at last to return home, and his exile is over.

I fear, however, that fate has not the heart to give him any inkling of the truth to-night. As he packs the bundle of Carrie's letters, he is seeing Main Street again on Saturday night, looking in at old Mr. Dabney's office in the Preston Block, wondering if the For Rent sign is still in that dusty window that once was Pike, Incorporated, hearing the rustle of the bare branches of the trees on Hawthorne Street, smelling the burning leaves on Washington Avenue, seeing the table set for dinner in at Asa's, looking out over the fading grass of the Country Club links, gazing on the homeward rush of Melchester in the early winter's dusk, cars, wagons, carriages, and motors gray misted as they pass the twinkling street lamps.

He will keep his trunk here with Ricorton's valises on Twenty-ninth Street. He will have to come back to New York, live here finally, if he and Ric stay in the producing business, and how long he will stay in Melchester he does not know.

The engagement of Sylvia Tremaine is only for two nights before she comes down the Hudson, and opens a week later in the metropolis. So he must be in New York for that. Miss Tremaine will give her usual supper party, afterward, that night on Broadway, and he will be one of the principal guests.

Melchester must be a trifle agog by now he thinks—the posters are all up, and the advance notices all pleasantly printed in the *Democrat Herald*. In fact, S. Sydney Tappan has received a pleasant letter from the dramatic editor whose name Hazleton had for-

gotten, and whom Sammy cannot now recall. In it, too, he has inquired after the opera!

The opera! Good gracious, thinks Sammy, with a start. He has nearly forgotten all about it in the rush of these later events. Well, it must have something good in it. He will look it up, and see if possibly it cannot be revised. A true artist, S. Sydney Tappan—off with the old love, on with the new! His interest now is all with the "Lady in the Lion Skin." He will see it before an audience soon. Before an audience, and Carrie!

Carrie!

He closes his travelling bag with a snap. Into his heart there has stolen a queer, little, aching feeling of desire. And his breath comes quicker, and his hands tremble just a trifle. Carrie!

He has remembered that evening at the Country Club—always to stand alone in his memory—when he kissed her so blindly! on the fresh, cool mouth, and slender throat, and crushed her to him until she whispered, half in shyness, half in passionate gladness, "Let me kiss you, too!" And he will be in Melchester to-morrow.

Ah, Carrie!

CHAPTER X

IN WHICH CARRIE HAS A PLEASANT BREAKFAST WITH HER FATHER, AND SYLVIA SPENDS A DISAGREEABLE AFTERNOON

LIVES, like cities, are filled with odd characters and many people; but unlike cities, they seldom present them in crowds. The real dramas of real life are usually played out in tiny groups of scenes with but two or three actors present, and long lapses between the curtains. To be constructed true to life, a play should have many curtains for even the simplest drama of human beings.

To-day, however, should be bright for our Sammy, whatever the construction. For it is the day, so the biography assures us, of his first, real, smashing triumph. Had they meant the triumph at the Schroeders', I should be inclined to agree with them. But I do not recollect that the house on Washington Avenue is mentioned in that estimable work.

They know at the Schroeders' this morning, nevertheless, that S. Sydney Tappan must be in town. A large bouquet of roses has arrived for Carrie the night before, and his play is scheduled for to-day. There has been no card with the flowers, but Mrs. Schroeder has been too canny to inquire who the sender might be. She does not care to take any chances of bringing up the subject of the Tappan boy just at present. It is because she does not exactly see how she can withdraw from the position she has taken. Perhaps that is why she has allotted the job to Mr. Schroeder.

He relishes it less than ever this morning. Indeed, there is an ominous silence about Carrie, as she eats

her breakfast, which does not augur well. These months have seen quite a reversal of form at the Schroeders': pounding on tables has fallen into disrepute; loud yelling, as a method of driving home an argument, is no longer feasible. Carrie's eternal questions have reduced the Schroeder forces to the minimum. Good heavens, there is no reason for a great many things!

It is why silence is the potent weapon most in favour now. The Schroeders, including the offspring, disapprove of Carrie in stern silence.

"I met a man called John Rouse yesterday," says Carrie, steadily, at last. "Do you know him, father?"

She will not talk of Sammy, though she is trying hard to be calm at the thrilling prospect before her this evening.

Mr. Schroeder's face falls. This is a poor beginning. It will take some time to clear up the Tappan affair at such a rate.

"Yes," he says, with unusual force. "A crook!"

He is beginning seriously to consider taking his breakfasts out. It seems almost as if every subject they discuss were a most disagreeable one. His wife, however, has set him the task of straightening the Tappan mess, and he must do it.

Carrie brings him back to John Rouse.

"I think it is our fault if he is a crook," she says quietly.

Mr. Schroeder turns quite purple. Is everything his fault?

"Nonsense," he says, as loudly as he dares. "The man is a crank, a dynamiter, anarchist, socialist—I don't know what all. What have we got to do with it?"

"We have closed our ears to him," answers Carrie.

"And will continue to," retorts Mr. Schroeder. Is this what they teach the girls at the Settlements? "If I had my way, I'd shoot all such fellows against a stone wall. That would cure them of their ideas."

Dimly he recognizes a real enemy when he sees one; and this Rouse, although he does not exactly understand why, rouses his last ounce of fighting blood.

"And make revolutionists of their friends," Carrie remarks, slowly, though her eyes flash a little. She knows how she would feel should some one shoot her friends against a stone wall. "That is the trouble," she goes on. "We won't listen—any of us."

"Who wants to listen to such drivel?" demands Mr. Schroeder angrily.

This subject drives him mad. All the fools in the world seem to have banded into this group called by all these names he cannot make head or tail of, and so lumps magnificently together.

Socialists! They can never divide up all the vegetables is Mr. Schroeder's intelligent view of socialism and socialized industry. There usually rises, too, before his dimly lit vision, a sort of huge soup kitchen where thousands of people sit eating common and communal soup, in a final effort to divide the last drop—and he shudders! The only good he has ever been able to see in it is that he himself is a slow eater.

Somewhere, however, there is a hazy question in his mind. It does not seem reasonable that these people who are so desirous of justly dividing the soup can be the ones who are throwing bombs. Or is it, perhaps, that they object to soup at all, and wish stew? There must be some discrepancy, somewhere; or else they are all fools, anyway, and don't know better! This is an echo from his wife.

"We are driving them to do the things they do," says Carrie, "by not listening! It is our fault now—just as it was, in a different cause, two thousand years ago."

This, of course, is insanity. Who knows where any of them were two thousand years ago? It is typical of this stuff; nothing on which a practical man can put his hand!

"These people aren't successful, that's all!" he says

angrily. "They want to get what we have. That is all the talk is about. Let 'em work, and save their money as I did, and they won't have time for all this nonsense."

The nucleus of that first grocery store is quite forgotten, now. Mr. Schroeder is the heaviest stockholder in a great many enterprises these days. Let people work, not think; it is much better so. There are fewer disturbances in the labour market. This Rouse, he knows, preaches dynamite and sabotage. Mr. Schroeder becomes quite excited.

"Foreigners, most of them! If they don't like America, let them go back. We don't ask them over here! The more you do for them, the more they want. Just look around at the factories and towns—half again the wages they used to get, fine sanitary factories, and still, by George, they kick!"

He grunts. He has almost persuaded himself that he and his stockholders gave these people all these improvements willingly; there were strikes, to be sure, but probably they would have given them the things sooner or later, anyway. There has always been some competition.

Carrie sighs.

"I don't know, I am sure, father," she says, almost sadly. "The fine factories give just as many lay-offs as before. The better machinery just seems to turn the things out faster, and the better conditions produce more work from each employee—and less employment for all."

"Well," retorts Mr. Schroeder, "we can't give work when there isn't any. We've got to lay them off to make a profit."

"A profit," Carrie says quietly. "While the workers starve."

"Let 'em go some place else, then," retorts Mr. Schroeder. "They don't have to work for us." He has been over this a hundred times already.

"It is the same thing everywhere for them!" she cries.

"Where can they go? They've got to work for you!"

"But I can't help that, can I?" shouts Mr. Schroeder. What a state of affairs when a man must justify his business affairs to his own daughter!

"We can all help, if we will," Carrie answers.

If she were only a man—like Sammy now—what a God-sent opportunity!

She has worked a year among the poor now, and the heartrending tragedy of poverty has stirred her soul. There is such plenty here on earth for all.

It is the first, faint sounding of the new crusaders' call echoing in her heart; that translation of the spirit of the pioneer, who blazed the forest of a new world, and bore liberty to its home in the wilderness—translated now into a new spirit of humanity: a spirit which gathers strength day by day for its assault upon the citadel of poverty—hopeless, stinging, bestial, degrading poverty—and for its new battle for the souls of men and women; a spirit led by a myriad modern Pauls from modern Antiochs; the same spirit that imbued the empire-building West, turned now, in the East, from its conquest of the soil, to the higher conquest of civilizations monster, poverty; a spirit old as Christ, yet so new that the Mr. Schroeders of the world cannot recognize it yet.

Into her mind, as she sits at the table, there comes then the picture of John Rouse, violent, ignorant, proud, his vision blurred and distorted by the trampling of the monster, yet within him the conviction of his own righteousness making him a fire brand to set alight the dimmed imaginations of the men who toil; men who, as yet, compose the vast mob of unskilled labour, banded into no union, and with no word of hope from all the world save that from the desperate Industrial Workers of the World—wolves calling out to wolves with the voice of need and hunger. John Rouse! In spite of his faults she cannot withhold a certain admiration for the fire of the man. Is it, she wonders, but another manifestation of that spirit of liberty, trampled this time out

of all semblance to the original, and shining in the Welshman's face only as defiance and fearlessness in the face of a world of death?

It is as she sits opposite her father, and thinks of John Rouse and the man across the table from her, so different in their ideas, yet so alike in the incompleteness of their vision, their mutual lack of understanding and sympathy, that the deathless words from Palestine echo in her heart: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." An older generation, these two with no watchwords except "Death But No Surrender!" Will this new one be the same?

Mrs. Schroeder has come into breakfast now, however, and the vision fades from Carrie's mind as the severe face of her mother looks across the table at her and Mr. Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder, too, is drinking his coffee with unwonted assiduity. The domestic drama once more holds the stage.

Confound it, Mr. Schroeder is thinking, he has not yet mentioned this Tappan boy. He rebels a little. Why is it that he must always pull the domestic cart out of the mud? He must do it now, however, as they are alone; alone, that is, except for Annie of course, who does not count with Mr. Schroeder. He must fix the thing some way before the meal is over.

He cannot drink his coffee any longer, so he emerges from his cup. Confound it, why does Annie stay in the room all the time? He has never noticed her before! Does she always hang around the screen like this?

Mr. Schroeder, I sadly fear, is a trifle self-conscious this morning.

"What are you going to do to-day, my dear?" he asks Carrie.

"The Settlement," she answers. She is perverse. The contact of many encounters with these two parents has worn the once almost too soft shyness of her into an uncertain surface. She knows he is referring to the evening and her Sammy, but she will not give him any satisfaction now. He hates the Settlement, so per-

haps the conversation will stop there. She would not admit it, but in her heart she no longer believes, either, that Settlements will change the world. To her the Settlement has changed its aspect: It is merely the school where one may learn to see the world as it is—a world going on forever around the school, almost unconscious of its presence save for the voice of the graduates whom it has educated. Education! another name, perhaps, for the light of the world. As for its being the cure-all——

Mr. Schroeder takes the plunge.

"I thought," he says playfully, "you might be busy this afternoon—with some one!"

Well, he is a fool, thinks Mrs. Schroeder. What a way to do anything! He is no farther ahead than he was before.

"What do you mean?" asks Carrie, a little wickedly. She is quite certain just what he means. She knows, however, that these two parents of hers are a very uncertain quantity. They have heard a great deal about S. Sydney Tappan these last six months, but just how coloured she does not know. Are they starting easily on the slide down to the plain of approval of Sammy this morning?

In the background, however, another character in this drama has been waiting, all unconsciously, a long time for her cue; so long that I fear most of the other actors have forgotten she was ever meant to have a part.

They do not know that in Sammy there breathes again for her the bright eyes and gay smile of a vanished policeman, dead now these twenty years; that, as she passes plates and glasses, the sight of Hawthorne Street in summer springs up before her Irish vision at the mention by these alien Schroeders of the name of Tappan—Hawthorne Street, and Sammy on an ancient horse block, with Asa in the elm-shadowed distance, and down the street the sound of horse's hoofs and buggy wheels telling her that some one is coming to take her driving in the country. And her eyes fill up again with

tears as they have these twenty years. She was not always forty and a servant, with a silent rôle to play. No, by Heaven, Annie! This is your cue, and I, for one, will stop and listen for your speech.

"It's Sammy your father means, Colleen," she cries, twisting up her hands. Sammy! Her Sammy! "And the play at the theatre to-night! We're all going. He's sent us tickets in the kitchen."

If anything will get you into Heaven, Sammy, it will be those tickets to the kitchen. There were times when you were a man.

Into the calm of the Schroeder dining-room, however, the remark has fallen like a vast explosion. It is as if the Sphinx had not only spoken, but had yelled. And yelled, perhaps, for woman suffrage. The Schroeders could not have been more startled. Annie has spoken from the heart. It was the only time she ever spoke at table.

Carrie saves the day.

"He's taking me, Annie," she answers calmly.

For all the rest of her life Annie never forgot that Carrie answered her, and let Mr. Schroeder wait. It is of such small things that happiness is made.

The revelation to Mr. Schroeder and his wife, however, that Annie not only waits, but thinks—and worse, sees through them—is not more astounding than the clear light her remark has thrown upon the real situation. Somehow, they have never figured her before as a real person. She has faded in with the china cabinet and the walls as an object. Her remark has scattered that idea forever. She has known what it was all about from the beginning and has completely routed Mr. Schroeder's careful strategy at the crucial moment. The bare fact, alone, is left now, that he was offering to cease the war on Sammy. Thank Heaven, however, the thing is done now. They can at least ask some questions and find out what is happening.

Inside Mrs. Schroeder, meanwhile, a great relief has come, also. She has been taking imaginative glances at

the future for some time now—with our Sammy in the rôle of lion of Melchester, dining nightly at the canal driver's descendants' mansion; ever since the success of the vaudeville sketch and the linking of his name with Sylvia Tremaine, in fact. If the young man is going to make some money, why, she can see no objection to him at all.

The newspapers and the dramatic editor of the *Democrat Herald* have been principally responsible for her information; but for once it has been mostly correct. She knows the frightful penchant for distinguished artistic people that the leaders in society seem to have; perhaps on the theory of opposites. What more reasonable than that the once grand name of Tappan blossom forth once more among the best people of Melchester? She knows our Sammy has the added requisite of birth—if he comes forth also distinguished she can see the plain results.

Only one thing really worries her. The business of a playwright seems so very uncertain. Who knows the exact future of this "Lady in the Lion Skin," for instance? It may be a failure, and she will have smiled on S. Sydney Tappan all for nothing! Even her strange sense of humour will not permit the contemplation of still another aboutface in such a quandary. If she takes another stand, it will be for good. She must take the right one.

This is the reason why she is going out for dinner tonight, taking Mr. Schroeder with her. She will not risk meeting S. Sydney Tappan until she has seen his play and measured the applause! Her new position can be assumed upon the following day with grace and, all important—certitude. A risky, exciting life, this life of the social aspirant; and necessitating great care and study—with never a real showdown with one's soul.

I think it was partly the questions her parents asked her at breakfast that morning that roused in Carrie the great curiosity she had all the rest of the day to see the woman about whom Sammy had written her so much,

and on whose magnetism so much depended. Sammy has told her that on Sylvia Tremaine rests the success or failure of his play. What sort of person is this Sylvia? And will she do her part?

In Carrie's heart is still the conviction that her Sammy is simply modest. This play will succeed because of its inherent worth and dramatic quality—though, of course, Sylvia Tremaine will help. It is not that she does not like the idea that another should help S. Sydney Tappan to his pinnacle of fame either: it is that Sammy needs no help, no one with whom to share his honours. He is able to carve his own niche in fame's temple. She can see that Sylvia's part will require character acting of the finest sort, but she is only familiar with the bare outline of the plot, and not its technical working out. There has been no time to send her any copy of the play.

Sammy has written her from New York that he wishes her for dinner at the hotel alone; and afterward they will see the play from the shelter of a box. But she will not be at liberty till five-thirty, so he is to call for her on Hague Street, as he once used to at the Y. W. C. A.

Meanwhile, he will have a last talk with Sylvia at tea, before the play. Sylvia does not eat dinner. Four-thirty tea suffices her until the theatre is over. She can get some rest in this way from five until seven-thirty and go to her work refreshed.

It is just four o'clock as Sammy knocks upon her door, and she calls "Come in!"

He has been having his qualms of doubt ever since he called Carrie on the telephone at two o'clock, and she seemed so excited about seeing the play. In some subtle way the atmosphere of Melchester impresses him as different from New York. Is it Melchester, though, so much as Carrie? The girls upon the street, now; they are like New York—the same indefinable suggestion of conscious sex in the way they dress, and give first aid to their complexion. He can remember, not so many years ago, when no one in Melchester dared use rouge or

paint; but now he cannot distinguish between some of his old friends and the demi-monde until they are within speaking distance.

Why is it, then, that the scene in the last act seems to trouble him this afternoon? It has taken him some time to find out just what it is that has been bothering him, and he is certain now it is this scene. It means success in the metropolis, he knows, and surely that is all that he is after. He is quite convinced, too, that it will take Melchester by storm. And yet, in spite of that, he is uncomfortable. Is he wondering, perhaps, what Carrie will think of Sylvia Tremaine? Or of his play, and— incidentally, himself?

Sylvia turns from the window as he enters, her eyes lighting up at the sight of him.

"I'm so glad you have come, Sydney," she says plaintively. She points at the bald, big German in the chair by the window. "Friedy here has been scolding me ever since he came!"

"He is losing his manners," says Sammy gayly. "He doesn't realize how fortunate he is."

"Miss Tremaine needs more than a manager to look after her," says Friedman, his watery blue eyes blinking rapidly. "She needs a husband!"

Sylvia scowls.

"You won't get the place, old pig!" she says, making a face at him. "You'll be nice to me, anyway, Sydney," she adds, with a complete change of tone. "I have a first night ahead of me in three hours!"

Friedman rises with a little grunt.

"I don't see how you ever learn your parts, Sylvia," he says half whimsically. "You're mostly crazy, I think."

"Go out!" she says threateningly. "Or I'll retire this minute with your old theatre full! Retire with Sydney here, and we'll live the simple life somewhere far from disagreeable managers and fat old pigs."

As Friedman goes out, Sammy seats himself at the tea table and helps himself to toast.

"Is it a good house?" he asks nonchalantly.

"When it's me!" says Sylvia, stamping her foot. "Of course it's full. If you're going to be disagreeable, too, you can go."

Sammy turns and looks at her in surprise.

"What's the trouble?" he asks.

Sylvia watches him from the bed through half-closed lids.

"It's me, Tappy," she confesses meekly. "I'm a devil on my first nights! I haven't done that little second-act scene, the one Friedy has been making such a fuss about, so he is mad. How do I know how I'm going to do it until the time comes? The stage is all mine."

Sammy gazes at her meditatively.

"Consider yourself flattered," he says, after a little pause.

"Why?" asks Sylvia.

"I turned down a tea this afternoon at the Dobbs'—just for you!"

"Who are the Dobbs?" she asks indolently.

"My roommate at college," replies Sammy.

"All of them?" she murmurs lightly.

Sammy looks at her reproachfully.

"Every one of them, of course," he answers sternly.

"They used to live next door to us on Hawthorne Street, before they made a fortune in real estate. They wanted me to bring you, of course, until I told them how exclusive you were."

Sylvia does not answer. She has gotten up by now, and is looking out of the window down upon Main Street, eight stories below.

"It is a wretched little village, isn't it?" she says, at last. "I shall be glad to get back to New York. I always am. How is Carrie, and when do I see her? And what have you been doing since early morning that you haven't been round to see me before?"

He laughs.

"After all, I used to live here, you know," he answers

amusedly. "I have been greeting the charter members of your old home Knockers' Club, mostly." He looks at her seriously. "You have got to put this thing across big to-night for my sake if for no one else's. Come in and meet Carrie, for a moment, before you go to the theatre. She will be having dinner here with me."

Sylvia puts her chin in her hands, and looks at him.

"Haven't you seen her yet?" she asks curiously.

Sammy shakes his head.

"Friedman made me change the first act opening, and I've spent most all day over at the theatre getting the thing right."

She rises and goes to the table by the windows.

"Some mail for you," she says, bringing back a few letters. "From the theatre."

The theatre in Melchester! How strange! Then he remembers. He has written Carrie that a note will reach him there if, for any reason, she will not be home when he calls up. She must have given it as an address for others if they wish to write; and the stage manager has sent them over to Friedman.

The vertical, bold handwriting of the first one gives him a strange feeling of age—in a flash of memory the writer has come back to him. It is Dorothy Alden's temperamental script, four words to the page! He can remember that there was a time when he actually waited for letters like these to come to his post-office box at Williams.

It is a little intimate note, she writes this time, to ask him out to call at their new house by the Country Club, and for dinner the next night. They will all be there, she says, the Haltons, and Asa and Carrie—as he perhaps knows already—and some newcomers, too; new, that is, to Melchester since he went away.

Since Pike, Incorporated, failed, she means, Sydney Tappan thinks a little bitterly, as he tears the note up under Sylvia's queer gaze, and opens the others. He has learned a great deal since that night at the Country Club when Asa and Biff Baker were starting for their

transcontinental tour across Montana. Max Stimson, Henry Clark—whatever happened to them all, he wonders, now? How suddenly his old life dropped away without a word from any of his former friends! Will all life be like that, he wonders? No, not all. Carrie and Ricorton and Sylvia he can count on till the end.

The other notes are half formal, half familiar, with a desire through them all to take up S. Sydney Tappan once more, and fête Miss Tremaine.

He tosses them over to Sylvia, who reads them curiously with a little sniff. She never accepts invitations during her tryout week.

When she is through, she looks up with a little smile.

"Do you really consider living here again, Tappy?" she asks, in some concern.

"I don't know," he answers. "It's home—in a way."

"Home!" says Sylvia musingly. "It's a word I hardly know the meaning of," she sighs. "A stage life seems first brother to a travelling one, doesn't it?"

"It has its compensations," Sammy replies.

"See Mr. Emerson, page 26," she laughs. "I would die, though, if home meant Melchester and Main Street, and Washington Avenue to me. I like the excitement of New York, of the theatre, of adventure, romance! Don't you? Or are you going to settle down to teas and motor cars in Melchester, with an occasional evening at the theatre and regular attacks of whooping cough and measles in the nursery?"

"It doesn't sound attractive," he admits.

"And no me around, Sydney, to bother you and make love to you, and say shocking things. I don't believe I am really shocking after all, Tappy. I should blush to let you hold my hand, though I am perfectly willing for you to stay while I take my nap. It is habit, Tappy—all that one is accustomed to, that's all."

She stretches before the window.

"I am going to lie down now, Tappy. Stay or go, just as you like."

She pats a yawn and goes into her bedroom and un-hooks her tea gown, while Sammy looks at his watch.

"It's five o'clock now," he says. "I'll be going. I'll come behind with Carrie, if you don't show up at dinner."

"Pray for us, Tappy," Sylvia says earnestly, coming out and shaking his hand. "We'll win."

And she closes the door behind him; to stand a moment in thought, in her face a strange little look of longing. Then she shrugs her white shoulders, ivory in the dusk, and makes a tiny face.

"Probably I would hate him in a year, like all the rest!" she says whimsically.

And she wraps her negligée about her, and flings herself upon the bed, to sleep until Marie, her maid, shall come back from her walk, and wake her for the theatre.

CHAPTER XI

IN WHICH SAMMY, WITH SYLVIA'S HELP, SHOWS OFF
HIS SPOTS, AND RETURNS TO NEW YORK TO PONDER
UPON CARRIE'S OPINION OF THEM

IN THE winter dusk outside S. Sydney Tappan is walking rapidly down Grand Street, toward its garish junction with Hague, a mile away from the downtown section. Gay with the light of corner saloons, this junction, the only cheerful spot in the desolate, depressing stretch of paintless, weather-beaten wooden houses, which have not yet given way to tenements; houses crouching miserably, each in its own sooty yard behind broken picket fences. Built with hope and love once, these houses now gone to decay, even as the souls of their occupants. It is the quarter where the poorer workers live, and the Settlement house is located.

As our Sammy walks jauntily along, the years seem to slip from his shoulders and vanish in the dying December sunset, and he is again twenty-one, and striding through the damp, wet street to call for Carrie to take her home. New York could be a dream, Ricor-ton and Sylvia and Ruby mere phantoms, half grasped and vanished now. Whatever became of Pike, he wonders, and old Mr. Dabney? He blushes. He has never written the kind old man nor heard from him since the day he left Melchester to enter the show business. It has been partly pride; but the rest, I fear, is selfishness.

There is no name over the branch Settlement house on Hague Street, and did S. Sydney Tappan not know the number, and detect with it a certain air of brighter cleanliness, he would not know it as a place different

from the others. There are more lights here though, not just a dim lamp in the kitchen economically trimmed; and the blinds hang straight, with no broken shutters, and in the yard no rags or broken glass lie along a rotted walk leading to a heart-broken sagging porch. These houses on Hague Street, however, do not constitute poverty, the *Democrat Herald* will tell you; these are happy homes, a trifle soiled, perhaps reeking filth and disease, but still happy and humble enough for easy editorials. What a setting for a night scene in a play of the submerged tenth! It is our Sammy's thought as he turns in at the gate, and ascends the steps and knocks.

It is Carrie who answers his knock; and her hand flies to her throat, and her eyes shine with misty tears at the sight of him in the doorway. He has come at last.

Let us turn away, however. There is an audience of seven little girls in the room beyond, and surely that is sufficient. Their giggles are good warrant for the fact that he has kissed her, and she has stayed in his arms, oblivious to all the world in the sweetness of being close to him once more. Even the little girls are stilled, however, as she disengages herself, and turns around, the colour flooding her cheeks. They have never seen any one look like that in all their little gray lives, and it silences them. It is time to get supper and their mothers have gone home, and they can only make dolls for a short while longer, but childhood is the same the world over, and the lives of these little folk will not be dull and hopeless until the imagination of childhood is swallowed by the manhood cynicism of the industrial world. They recognize a fairy story when they see one yet; and there is one in Carrie's face. It is why they are silent.

"What God-forsaken people!" exclaims Sammy, involuntarily, a few minutes later.

They are walking slowly down Hague Street, now, and a bakery window has cast its light upon the painted,

drawn face of a woman, her shoulders curiously hunched, her distorted figure poorly covered with black sateen which shines with age or dirt, in her eyes a look of stony hopelessness, all about her a realization of the hideous repulsion of the cast-off, the used-up woman of the streets. She seems to shrink from the passerby like a starved cur of the brutal alleys.

"Good-evening, Emma," Carrie has said; but the woman has answered nothing as she goes by.

Good God, was she ever a child, making paper dolls upon the floor? Sammy shivers and draws Carrie closer to his side. He does not even like to think that she has spoken to the creature.

"I know her," Carrie says, simply, a moment later. She almost wishes she had not been with Sammy. Her happiness must be so plain in her face; and for Emma, she knows, life can hold no promise.

"Emma Rouse," she says slowly. "John Rouse's mother."

Some one's mother, thinks Sammy with a shudder. Into his own mind has come for a brief second the picture of his own mother as he remembers her in Paris and on Hawthorne Street.

"She came from Wales, with her little son," Carrie goes on in her low, full voice. "Went to work in the clothing factories twenty years ago. She couldn't make a living—wages, lay-offs, you see—not enough to bring up her little boy; so she—made it other ways—just at first—and they discharged her at the factory because of it—and she—you can see her life in her face."

She ends up. Sudden comprehension comes to Sammy.

"That is why she does not speak to you!" he says.

"Why shouldn't she?" cries Carrie fiercely.

"Because you are your father's daughter," answers Sammy. "And he means the factories to her."

Carrie stops still on the sidewalk.

"Oh!" she cries, a hurt look in her eyes. "When I never harmed her at all!" She is silent a moment.

then goes on in a low tone: "I suppose it is because I haven't done the suffering, and she has—that she can hate me."

Sammy is looking at her with new eyes. Experience is rapidly making a woman of this slender girl at his side, the tender lines of youth still evident in her charming figure, not even yet rounded to the full.

"It isn't fair," she says to him, with little, clenched hands. "When I am doing all I can to help now."

Sammy is silent. He does not know much about these things. He needs his own efforts to make a fortune before he can think of anything else. He has learned his lesson, he feels sure. Nowadays, one must have money. The scramble of his generation for success is on, and he cannot be left behind to live in houses such as he has just left on Hague Street. That is the penalty for thinking of anything else.

"She might have been that way, anyhow," he says, more to comfort her than anything else. He can see, dimly, that the morality which threw the woman to the wolves looks culpable to her. That he should be discussing morals with Carrie does not seem strange at all. He has become accustomed to the plain speech of the stage, and does not realize the distance Carrie has travelled to have acquired this point of view.

"If she had a weakness the rest of us should have helped, not hindered!" she cries. "And she had that little boy—I don't believe it!"

"What became of him?" asks Sammy curiously.

"I know him," answers Carrie. "He's a syndicalist—an I. W. W. agitator. Do you wonder?"

Dimly, Sammy realizes who these people are. These are the dynamiters who believe the socialists will never accomplish their reforms by argument, and so prefer to blow the world in pieces and start over with themselves on top. Carrie is evidently mixing with the world.

They have turned into Washington Avenue now, with these thoughts of the I. W. W. still in Sammy's mind.

Washington Avenue looks much the same, he thinks, except that the elms are bigger and finer, and the fine new street lamps shine on a smoother pavement, on which horses' hoofs and carriage wheels no longer echo. Instead there sounds the velvet roll of motors and the puff of exhausts, with now and then the harsh honk of horns from the swift-moving procession of limousines and electrics and automobiles that crowds the roadway.

From whence this mushroom prosperity, this gigantic rubbing of Aladdin's lamp, in these short years? It almost seems as if the wealth of a hundred years of labour had come into view this one decade he thinks. Except, that is, on Hague Street; there is no sign of a hundred years of wealth there. Can it be that the labour of these next hundred years is being capitalized, and put out at interest already? An interest which a labouring world groans to pay, and strives with increasing violence to repudiate each day of toil?

It was the first time that he grasped, lamely, his final conception of the balance of society I think—grasped it dimly—only to relegate it half understood into the recesses of his mind; one of his first tiny flashes of vision. The scales of society balancing the happiness and misery of the world, and the fabric of civilization the price of keeping the balance! He saw dimly the happiness of Washington Avenue weighing heavier and heavier over against the misery of Hague Street, until for a second he feared lest the day might come when the scales would break, and society fall in pieces, unless the balance could right itself again. It is odd to consider now that he did not see then the only thing that will ever keep the scales balancing correctly for us—did not realize, too, the great influence he might one day exert in the right exercise of that dramatic talent God had given him.

But the vision vanished as quickly as it had come—vanished with the pressure of Carrie's hand as they turned in at 1200 Washington Avenue.

"The family are out for dinner," she says, laughingly, as they go in the house. And she kisses him as they stand for a moment in the hallway. "I won't be twenty minutes dressing—and I think there is some one in the kitchen who might like to see you!"

And she flies upstairs to her room. She does not care now that there is no picture of Sammy in it. He is downstairs, himself, with his picture soon to come out in the magazines. The play will be a great success, of course! And she will be seeing it in two hours!

"I have been entertaining Annie in the kitchen," Sammy says a half-hour later, as they get into the taxicab, and are whirled off to the Mohawk Hotel for dinner. "She is just the same."

"She has been just waiting for this night to come so that she could see you again," Carrie answers. "It is quite pathetic."

Well, this is to be the proudest moment of Annie's life to-night, Carrie, so perhaps you had better reserve your sympathy. I only wish I could promise you as much. You are not mentioned, you see, in the biography until the end—so you missed the smashing triumph, somehow!

She and S. Sydney Tappan are on edge to-night in the Mohawk Hotel, however—on edge with excitement and pride and nervousness. Only an hour and twenty minutes now before the curtain! It is a wonder that Sammy does not wear off all the gold from that watch of his, the way he peers at it every few moments. He has had a telegram of good luck from Ric and Ruby, and many notes from Melchester women whose names he dimly remembers hearing his mother speak. The house, too, is all sold out, and the standing-room-only sign hung up! How will they take it?

"Isn't it so exciting!" cries Carrie.

She is more wrought up than if she had written this play herself. To-night is to be her Sammy's great triumph, and she is satisfied. How bitterly she has regretted her limitations until now! Limitations of

sex and ability, which have forced her to stay at home while her Sammy fought the world. The world-old tragedy of waiting!

If only she could have shared the room on West Twenty-ninth Street, while her Sammy wrote this play! She does not wish success for which she has not struggled, too. The hand of caste has been heavy on both these young people, and it has never occurred to either of them that anything is possible without a certain amount of money to live on. How sensible! I hear you saying. Well, perhaps. A second-floor back room and poverty require more of the spirit than the conquest of Peru.

Where to-night, though, I wonder, is that crowd of nodding heads which approved so heartily of the shelving of S. Sydney Tappan a year ago? If we listen at the candle-lit tables in the Hotel Mohawk, I fear we shall be likely to hear only exclamations of approval, with underneath, perhaps, a little undercurrent of envy. In all the approval, too, there will be but the ringing of bells for this boy's success—not a voice raised for the real achievement.

It is not the ability to write a play which may be the equal of Ibsen's that is the object of the adulation. No! He will be very rich! A successful play means money. That is the secret of it all. This same play might be published and acclaimed to the skies by the critics of five continents, but if many copies were not sold at the old book store on Ebenezer Street, these same people would pass our Sammy by in the streets without a word. Art must necessarily be low in a commercial democracy; but mark this, it is not the democracy which plays the deuce—it is the adjective.

That Carrie is to see the "Lady in the Lion Skin" and not a new Ibsen born again, she does not know as yet. The world of ideas and emotions has not yet fallen into settled grooves for her, with signboards plainly labelled on each groove. To-night she only realizes that her Sammy has his chance to succeed at last.

Just what success is, she has never analyzed. There is no label on the groove. Instinct has great play at twenty-four.

To S. Sydney Tappan success seems as dream-like as the rehearsals off Broadway did. He cannot realize what it will mean. His mind cannot leap the one vital fact that this girl before him, half child she seems to him still, will be his if the play succeeds—his alone, to love and own in passionate surrender. The tinder of her soul has struck fire on his ever since he can remember; her sympathy now transformed to passion at their lightest touch. He cannot gaze at her without feeling a wave of desire for her overwhelm him. Carrie has wakened the sleeping passion of the man in youth, and he will always want her.

The crowd is streaming past the hotel now, however; late diners are looking anxiously for waiters and their checks, while the downtown clocks are pointing a trifle past the hour. Melchester has an almost metropolitan look, with its brightly lighted stores, its brilliant signs and street cars, its hurrying thousands of humanity, bound now, the vast majority, for entertainment.

S. Sydney Tappan gazes at them as he and Carrie walk slowly to the theatre around the corner. These are the hearts he will thrill to-night—thrill with those same ideas with which he struggled in that West Twenty-ninth Street room with the cheerful carpet!

As he looked back on that night afterward, he realized that he was not conscious of the audience at all, after the first curtain slowly rose. He was conscious only of Carrie; the murmur of the audience and rattling of programmes a background for the symphony of her face—a face from which the passion has faded, and which leans forward now absorbed in the mimic world devised by the man beside her. It is the Seventh Day for Sammy. I wonder will he look upon his handiwork and pronounce it good?

It does not seem possible to him, however, that he really wrote this play which he is seeing now for the

first time. The thing has suddenly sprung to life before his gaze, the breath of existence swept into it by this first audience before which it struts.

Sylvia, too, seems to have acquired some strange new magnetism which holds the crowd in its seats, and makes it laugh and sigh and weep in tiny gusts, as a wind in fall sweeping through the trees.

Through it all, too, he can feel, creeping slowly, the sensuousness of its suggestion, barely sensed at first, mounting higher as the play progresses until a tiny spot of red flames in the cheek of each self-conscious auditor, and no one moves or touches his neighbour lest the movement seem too self-conscious and a breaking of the spell—a spell woven by this voluptuous creature on the stage, who seems not like a mere woman but some incarnation of amorous passion, feeding upon each new victim, luring on each new dupe, yet pulsing with the life and grace and marvellous attraction of a woman all the while, a new Cleopatra of the Boulevards, as they call her in the play, her mainspring ungovernable passion. Good heavens, is this Sylvia Tremaine?

In Carrie's soul a chill cloud of horror has come slowly, coldly. Is this the product of her Sammy, these the ideas with which he lives, this the ideal he would instill into these human beings in the crowd below them?

To Sammy, too, there has come a great uneasiness. He feels that something is changing in this girl beside him; yet he cannot take his eyes from the woman on the stage. How she is holding this audience in her hand! Leading them skilfully, artistically, madly to the great climax in the last act! In the next act, he realizes with a sense of blinding fate. Good God, is not the thing too strong? Will the house break loose, or will Sylvia hold them to the end, past the gasping thrill? In his mind fear for his offspring struggles with the deathly apprehension that is creeping on him from the slender girl by his side.

"I must see Sylvia!" he says, hoarsely, as the curtain falls upon the second act, and the audience begins calling for the author. "I think she is overdoing it. You'll excuse me, won't you, please, Carrie?"

He might be pleading for a child.

"Yes, of course, Sammy," she says in answer.

And he has gone down the little dark hallway to the stage back of their box before she can control the vast sea of emotions which struggle for mastery in her being. Is this Sammy, her Sammy, and she the Carrie she has always known herself to be? What has been set loose to-night in this humdrum theatre in which she has seen a hundred plays before?

In S. Sydney Tappan's mind there is but one scene as he hurries down the corridor, the sound of applause growing fainter behind him. It is of Sylvia's apartment on Thirty-fourth Street, and Sylvia in a bathing suit every line of her showing forth. She has meant nothing to him in the apartment because his mind has been filled with no thought such as is holding this great audience to-night. What will she be upon the stage, in view of what has gone before this evening? Will the shock be too great? I think he is hardly conscious that this audience of which he thinks really means only Carrie to him.

He knocks upon the dressing-room door, and Marie lets him in. Sylvia does not appear until some time after the opening of this third act, so he knows she will have time to see him. With a great effort he controls himself. After all, she has been merely acting the part as they planned it.

"Hello, Tappy," she calls gayly from her mirror. She is dressed in a hideous old green kimono. "Excuse this rag. I wear it to mortify my soul. It kills the star to get too conceited, they say, Sydney, and I have to see myself in the glass this way."

She is gay, inconsequential, he sees. The thing so far is a success, and she is happy, secure in final victory.

"How is it going?" she asks.

Sammy sits down rather heavily upon her trunk.

"It is wonderful," he admits.

"Wonderful, but——" she quotes. She turns and looks at him questioningly.

"But rather strong," says Sammy, a little desperately. How can he ever convince this woman of what he means? What does he mean anyway?

She spreads out her hands characteristically.

"*Que voulez vous?*" she laughs lightly. "Life isn't for infants, Sydney dear."

"Can't we tone down the climax in this act?" he queries, as lightly as is possible. It does not do to be too serious with Sylvia.

"Never!" she says decisively. "What have I been leading up to?"

She looks at him suddenly from under the hair she is brushing. She does not allow Marie to touch her hair for a performance.

"What's gotten into you, Sydney?" she asks. "Has Melchester's provincialism given you a change of heart? Why, they are waiting for that gasp out there—and they won't be pleased unless they get it. As well leave out Svengali's picture from 'Trilby,' or Nora's exit from the 'Doll's House,' or the final result of Justice to poor Calder. They won't get it unless it's driven home!"

He looks at her hopelessly. Artistically, he knows, she is right. For the first time he realizes that the idea of the play is quite unspeakable—that is why he hates to drive home its point! Yet the thing is cleverly done. He is surprised himself at the deftness with which he has hinted and Sylvia has carried out his hints. It will be a knockout in New York! Even Melchester has been snared, he sees; just why is he here, anyway?

"The last-act things, Marie," Sylvia is saying. "I'll talk to you in a minute, Sydney. I am never comfortable until I'm ready for my cue."

How can the thing be altered, he finds himself think-

ing as Sylvia adds the last touches to her toilette. Confound it, this scene is just the point! She has snared them all, to fool them!

"Of course, we will get down the banks from a lot of sappy critics, Tappy," she is saying, now. "But what is the difference? They never give me a good line anyway, and the more they say in this case, the better advertising."

She takes a lion skin from the trunk beside her.

"I'm not going to put that skin that I drag off the floor around me. I'll have this clean one behind the screen, and put it on instead. This one will really fit me, too, like a dress."

She hands her kimono to Marie, and wraps the lion skin about her.

"Perhaps it will be the next fashion, Tappy!" she exclaims, like a child.

"God forbid!" replies Tappy, with a laugh.

In his heart, however, he knows what her appeal will really be to those people in the seats. Physical passion, roused by the sight of her, displayed thus to the last degree of immodesty. There are many such women on the stage, he knows, more perhaps in musical comedy, but he has never known one before and the gulf between the real Sylvia Tremaine and the part she plays before the public is so vast that he is confounded. He can never tell her. It is success for her, as well as for him, and without it she will starve, or work in a department store. Commercial success in the theatre!

For a moment, too, he is strangely stirred by her presence so close to him that she seems to charge the air with a vital human electricity which makes him tingle. He has sense enough to know, however, that such a spell is ruin for the man or woman who comes beneath its charm. Passion to most of the world is but an incident of a few passing years; but to its victims, a lifelong servitude defeating all achievement. Sylvia, too, is conscious of this thrill, making her for

one brief second wish to throw herself into his arms, and overcome him with her perfumed madness. Then she laughs a tiny, bitter laugh.

"There is the first bell, Tappy," she says, a little uncertainly. There is a look of stifled emotion in her eyes. Once she could have loved this man, before she knew the world. But success has bought her, and she will give herself again to her God in a few minutes, out before the footlights. "Good-bye," she adds.

It is when she is alone with her maid once more, that she says to herself, half bitterly, half whimsically:

"I am five years older than he is, anyway. He wouldn't like me very long!"

Her God has made her cynical, also, with the terrible cynicism which seems to have the backing of experience. The cynicism of success!

Out in the box meanwhile, a strange new loneliness has been tugging at Carrie's soul. Deep down within her nature she has dimly recognized that this is not her Sammy who has written the "Lady in the Lion Skin," but a new Sammy, a spotted Sammy, to whom she is a stranger, and who is a stranger, too, to her.

Of a sudden she has felt all alone. A queer lump has risen in her throat. Into her mind has come the vision of her father's house—she does not call it home any longer—and the road which she has travelled since the night Sammy kissed her on the links out by the river. Can she travel on alone now, into the gray horizon there, without him?

Sammy, Sammy, I wonder you cannot see, as you come back into the box, that the slender girl there is breaking her heart in the silence she will not shatter though the theatre fall in pieces about her! She has come too far along that road ever to turn back now. She will go on until she dies. Mrs. Schroeder's determination has become character in her daughter. She always finishes everything she starts. And she hates the idea of this play. Ah, if only sometimes, Carrie,


you had not been quite so certain you were right! I would like to tell you that, oh, so badly, as S. Sydney Tappan sits down beside you and the curtain rises on the last act. It never pays to be too sure at first.

As she sits there, however, a rising current of remembrance is fast becoming a raging stream. Things meaningless of themselves are beginning to coagulate, take form, and at last stand out in startling distinctness to her. Through it all, too, there runs the dim acknowledgment of this woman's charm—a charm which she herself can never wield, but would scorn to if she could.

In a flash she sees herself, a girl in a small inland city, slender, hardly pretty—ah, Carrie, you do yourself injustice now, for your soul is in your face, and it is beautiful!—with a limited knowledge of life, and no great talent or beauty to attract and hold such as this Sylvia Tremaine possesses so abundantly. No wonder Sammy has been attracted. He has seen her constantly, been with her week by week; and no doubt she has felt the charm of him, for who can resist him?

Nearly eight months, now, too, since he went away. Eight months! And New York is not really far away—not so far that a great love or effort would not bridge the gap. In her soul a great loneliness wells up, though she holds back the tears until her throat is aching with the pain. After all, is her mother right? And the world but a place to be lonely in, with each person standing all alone, and the race to the most greedy?

She gazes on the stage at the entrancing creature there with new eyes, now. How many times this must all have been rehearsed before no eyes but Sammy's! In her heart, too, is a great bewilderment. How could her Sammy have written this? How he has changed! Her Sammy—no! In her there has come a great physical revulsion against him, against his ideas, against this Sylvia Tremaine; a revulsion that makes her flesh creep, though she cannot define the reason why in words, any more than her hatred of a snake. It is



instinctive, elemental, basic! Through the fine artistic shading, the charmingly tinted texture of this play, there is something that is horrible to her, something she loathes. And it has come from S. Sydney Tappan, the Sammy of her youth.

For a moment a great hatred for Sylvia Tremaine springs up. It is she who has called forth this monster in Sam Tappan! The feeling lives 'but a brief moment. Sylvia could never have called forth a thing which had no existence. It is Sammy, after all. Miss Tremaine is only interpreting. Somewhere, somehow, she feels that she herself has lost him, and this sensuous creature on the stage has won. In her mind there is no doubt of her diagnosis. Dramatic chameleons are not in her booth of character exhibits. S. Sydney Tappan has changed, and there is but the one explanation. A woman like this Sylvia will stop at nothing; and she has not stopped at Sammy.

Poor Carrie! You are not skilled at character dissection, nor the tinsel world of drama, and your warm, impulsive heart has been struck a chilling blow that calls for all your pride and strength to dissimulate. That S. Sydney Tappan has not as yet found his soul, and so wields his pen as in some dramatic mirror, you never will believe until life has forced home to you the conviction that people do not come in moulds, but are poured forth here for the moulding in great or less degrees. Providence is but preparing to-night the moulds you both shall fall in, and Sammy is very soft.

So soft that he can forget even his fear for a moment as the curtain falls upon the last act and the audience remains still seated, released now from their thralldom but applauding wildly this siren whom the curtain has shut off from their gaze, but whom nothing can erase from their thrilled imaginations. She has risen to her climax, surged past it, and gone steadily, relentlessly to the play's dramatic, frightful end, with Fenwick's dead body across her scorned one, her audience a vast sea of human souls stirred to their very depths.

This is success, indeed! In Sammy's mind there is nothing but the flush of victory as he stands bowing from his box, still denying these people the curtain speech of which his blind flight to Sylvia's dressing-room robbed them after the second act. He has no words. The whole thing is more dreamlike than ever, a slight touch of nightmare added now, with this inability of his to utter a word of thanks. It all seems like Melchester gone mad, and he himself leading all the rest with an awakening to come when he turns back into the box.

Yes, Sammy, your awakening is at hand.

For it is a strange Carrie who rises from the box and makes her way with S. Sydney Tappan through the crowded theatre aisle upon the side. She is but partially conscious that they have met Dorothy Alden in the foyer, and that Dorothy has taken Sammy by both hands and congratulated him upon his play's success.

"And your Miss Tremaine, Sam! She is perfectly wonderful! You must bring her out to-morrow night!"

The words have conveyed hardly any meaning to Carrie's heedless ears. She only wishes to be out of the building, out in the air, away from this place of sham and sinister make-believe, out where she can think. She hardly notices, either, the others of the eager groups that crowd around S. Sydney Tappan, as they go slowly through the lobby, and wait for their taxicab. There has been no mention of going to see Miss Tremaine. Only as they get in and the starter closes the door behind them does she get a glimpse of a face that she remembers: a heavy face with little, blinking eyes, which looks in the lowered window, and says:

"As sure as shooting, Tappy, wasn't it? She always gets them over!"

"Mr. Friedman, Sammy says in explanation, and then silence falls between them as they sweep through Main Street, and up the shining stretch of Washington Avenue, wet now with a touch of falling rain.

There has been no question of supper at the Hotel Mohawk, ever. Always, they have planned this ride to 1200 Washington Avenue alone together—just they two to taste the success they have waited for so many years. Success! Well, they have it. Even Mrs. Schroeder, at supper in the Mohawk, acknowledges it, and she is the court of last appeal in this particular case. Success is theirs to-night.

I wonder, though, why they are so silent. Is not Sammy to be praised? Or are these tears of joy which trickle so slowly from Carrie's eyes, buried in her hands? Her pride has all vanished now; that desire to hurt, which is so strange to her nature, quite gone. Carrie is but a girl, and she has recalled the letter she wrote him not so long ago about their common ideals and aspirations. They are all that make life worth living to her.

For a moment Sammy is aghast, as they go into the living-room where he used to call—though it seems years ago to-night. She is weeping openly. Does she hate this play of his as much as that?

"Don't you see why I care, Sammy?" she cries, clasping and unclasping her hands. "It isn't just the play. It is you. I can't bear to have you do it! Because it isn't you!"

In Sammy there is an extraordinary mixture of feelings. The successful artist, confused and mystified, is struggling with the heartache which the sight of Carrie's sorrow stirs in him. He cannot stand having his creation criticised thus harshly, and yet he feels dimly, somehow, that she is right.

"It is just a play," he says hoarsely, although it seems like *lèse majesté* to belittle it so.

He cannot tell now just why he wrote this thing. It has not been entirely for the dollars in it, though he craves success; perhaps has blinded himself to the truth. The idea has appealed to his dramatic imagination, and the thing has unrolled itself from his unconscious pen. These thoughts, which seem to rouse

Carrie so mightily, are but the thoughts of this Lady in the Lion Skin inside whose brain he has been these last few months. How can they be called his thoughts? He realizes, perhaps, that he would never have written it had he not gone to New York, and met Sylvia Tremaine. He has only realized what the Lady in the Lion Skin's thoughts might be after knowing Sylvia. Yet who will say that Sylvia is such a person? He knows that she is not. It is her imagination on the stage, as his in the manuscript.

"It is just imagination, Carrie," he says, again. "Don't you understand?"

But she shakes her head. In her mind is the picture of Sylvia in her loathsomely artistic semi-nakedness. He has had these thoughts from somewhere. Sylvia has been the source.

"You had to think it before you could write it," she says. It is all quite plain to her.

In Sammy's mind there is a little tiny feeling of revolt. After all, the play is a success! And she has not had one word for that. His conceit sticks out a little.

"It isn't every one who could write it, after they had thought it," he cries, nettled. The thing is good, he knows—considered as a piece of dramatic construction, almost extraordinary.

"But it is what you think that matters to me," she answers.

Sammy is stung to the quick. Why, it is the play that should matter!

"How do I know what I think?" he cries. "It is my characters who think, not I!"

"But you have to think for them, first," she says. "So, it must be you!" The thing is too plain to her. It cannot be dodged.

She is growing quieter now, too, beginning to see this thing for what it is. She does not realize that between her and the truth lies the tortuous forest of the artistic imagination through which no man has ever found a

track quite cleared. She can only conceive of a play as of a letter. It must represent what one thinks, or the writer is playing false.

"It is the idea of the play itself," she says. "Its lesson, its moral, its manner of construction, Sammy, not just what one character or so has said! You are glorifying what is horrible under the guise of presenting a moral."

In her heart she knows that he never could have gotten this idea from her and it is essentially an idea of woman! That is what hurts. It is his attitude toward, his thoughts about, women, about her. Her mind, however, is not quite clear yet. She only knows she distrusts profoundly the impulse which produced this play.—an impulse which must represent his feeling for this Sylvia Tremaine—a feeling which has been non-existent until he set eyes upon the woman.

Well, it is the habit of women to take things personally; and yet, before Heaven, Carrie, I am not so sure but what you are right, as you sit there on the divan trying to be fair, in spite of the waves of feeling which send those tiny drops of water to your eyes. You are trying not to think of yourself, too, in spite of what you know it means; and for one I think you are succeeding. There was a touch of Puritan in her that came to the surface all her life, when it seemed most unpleasant for her, and made her decide honestly.

In Sammy there is a feeling of desperation. He has done this thing unthinkingly, and must justify it now. Obstinate, too, his mind sticks to the fact that Sylvia is not what she is painted in Carrie's mind by the play. Neither will he admit, for a moment, that the beast of sensuousness has played with him for these past few months, and he has stultified his gift.

Our Sammy, so quick and keen to dissect things in his plays, will not turn the searchlight on himself to-night. Rather he will defend himself against all comers. Carrie could have chosen any other thing except this play of his, this child of his, the "Lady in the Lion Skin," and

"They don't want sermons on the stage, I tell you!" he replies.

"But to tell it wonderfully, touchingly, so that people will be moved even to change the world! It is why God gives each one of us some gift, I think, don't you?"

"I haven't any gift," he says uncomfortably.

"The most wonderful gift of all, Sammy, that of influencing other people's minds. You couldn't sell that for success, for money—I couldn't bear to see you."

"I could," says Sammy brutally. "I have seen the world, seen poverty, lived in it, and it is past for me. You have got to have money in this world and age. Let some one else ennoble it. I want success. I've learned my lesson. It's money that counts. And if my plays can get it for me, I'll give them what they want as long as I am able. It's a business just like any other. You've got to please your customers."

"And you can please them better if you appeal to their better selves! Please them better in the end!" cries Carrie.

"Not with Sylvia Tremaine!" he cries. "And Sylvia's my chance!" And could have bitten off his tongue a moment later for saying it. It is the truth.

Carrie draws a deep breath.

"She may be yours, Sammy," she says quietly. "But she is not mine, and never will be. I think more of myself than that."

But S. Sydney Tappan has taken the plunge now.

"I don't," he says calmly. "She's the most successful actress on the stage."

"But you see, my measure isn't success," she answers. Her pride has come to her assistance now. She has lost him, but he will never know the heart-stab it has cost her.

"There isn't any other measure," says Sammy. His call has gone its full length.

She shakes her head with a little smile in which no

humour ever lived. They might better understand one another now.

She rises and holds out her hand.

"I think our little dream is over, Sammy," she says bravely. "We've grown up. And the fairy tale has vanished. Aren't you a little bit sorry, too?"

But into S. Sydney Tappan's eyes, suddenly, little mists of water come.

"It hasn't vanished!" he cries vehemently. "Not for me—it never will."

"You don't want it to, but it has," Carrie answers.

There is a little, pitiful look in her eyes that only these four walls that have seen her life since childhood can ever understand. She is about to face the world alone, once more, with her Heaven in lumps of clay around her.

"It's behind us, and we've grown out of it at different ends."

She has a strange feeling that even these walls about her may not be substantial, now; all her life she has believed heart and soul in this thing which has been taken from her in an evening; and she will not think of the result.

In Sammy is rising, too, a slow, dull realization of what he has lost; a realization which overwhelms him as he strives to gauge it. Into his mind, in some dim way, has leaped the big front room on Hawthorne Street and the swaying of the curtains in the wind, and his mother lying for the last time on that bed he never will forget until he dies—its curved brass head and foot meaning home and the past to him, forever. Somehow, somehow, though he cannot describe it, he knows that he is losing his home again—the last home that he knows, in Carrie's heart.

Ah, Sammy! I could wish to-night that your fear of it would turn you from your path. Turn you while you are picking up your gloves and coat in the old-fashioned hall, and there yet is time. Turn you, to see the heartbreak in Carrie's face, and her tightly

twisted hands. It is the cross of Galilee again, to give up all for an idea. And you are hammering the nails. Hammering them, still, as you cross silently and take her hand.

Yet you hardly heard her faint "Good-bye!"—it was so overborne by the loud laughter of the Ironie Gods!

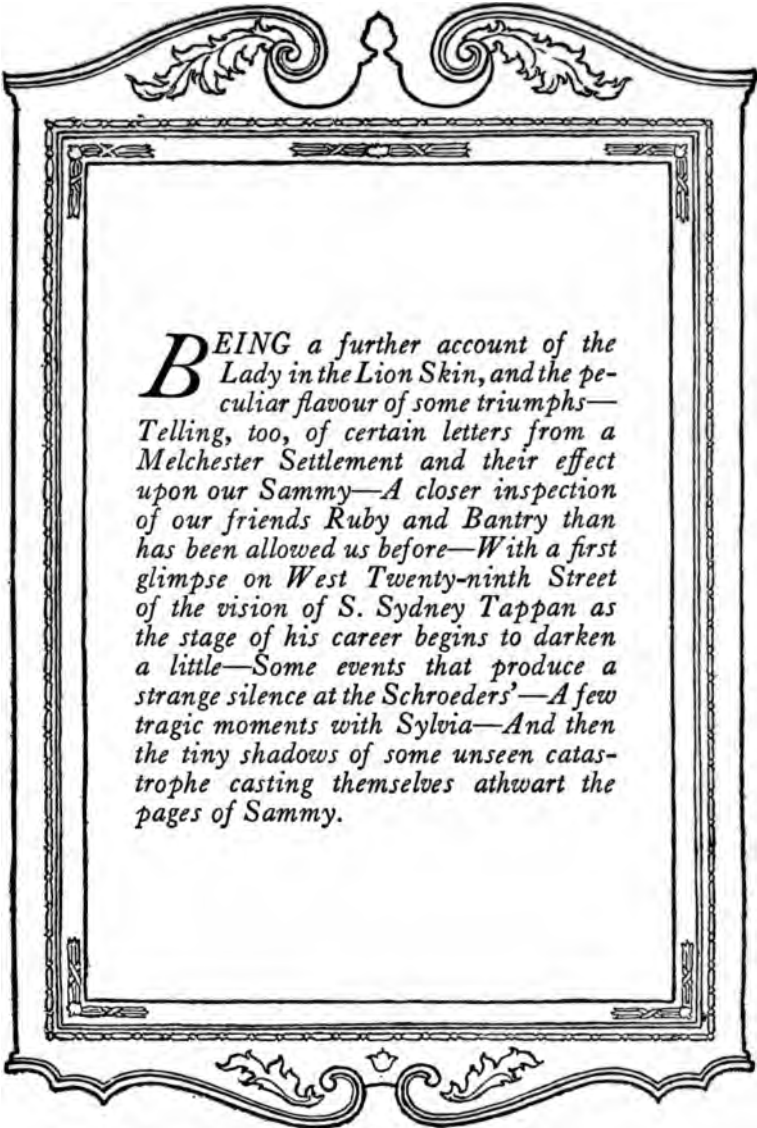
For the front door has opened now, and in the vestibule stands Mrs. Schroeder, with Mr. Schroeder behind, as suits the play. It was one of the most awful moments of Mrs. Schroeder's life. But it did not show upon her face. She has made a thousand decisions, this lady, since she started on her climb, and she makes this one with the loud applause of the theatre still ringing in her ears.

"Good-evening, Sam!" she says quite graciously. "Congratulations." And is gone in search of the fleeing Mr. Schroeder. She has made her decision, chosen her new standpoint, now, forever. She does not know as she hurries upstairs, a faint flush of red yet on her cheek, that downstairs, with the closing of the door, her daughter, her face buried in the pillows of the divan, has upset the world for her once more.

Well, it is the great, smashing triumph—but of the biography alone, I fear. There is no triumph in the strange, set face of S. Sydney Tappan as he strides past the billboards of the darkened theatre.

The Lady in the Lion Skin!
A Play by S. Sydney Tappan.

Sammy has not won, to-night, after all. It is the Lady in the Lion Skin who has won. She, perhaps, with those ideas of Mr. Schroeder's in the background. Our Sammy will be a success, now, you see.



***B**EING a further account of the Lady in the Lion Skin, and the peculiar flavour of some triumphs—Telling, too, of certain letters from a Melchester Settlement and their effect upon our Sammy—A closer inspection of our friends Ruby and Bantry than has been allowed us before—With a first glimpse on West Twenty-ninth Street of the vision of S. Sydney Tappan as the stage of his career begins to darken a little—Some events that produce a strange silence at the Schroeders'—A few tragic moments with Sylvia—And then the tiny shadows of some unseen catastrophe casting themselves athwart the pages of Sammy.*

CHAPTER XII

IN WHICH SAMMY BECOMES A SUCCESSFUL PLAYWRIGHT IN GOTHAM, AND NARROWLY MISSES HAVING A THOUGHT

IT WAS a raging Sammy who alighted from the late afternoon train in the Metropolis the next day. He has been justifying himself all day, now, ever since the train left Melchester in the morning, and has succeeded at last in getting himself into the proper state of mind. He has not called up Sylvia. A brief note has sufficed. Business of a pressing nature has called him to New York; he is sorry not to see her; she has placed him in her everlasting debt; the rest will be easy now, he is sure; there is no need to fear the verdict of Broadway; and he will see her when she comes down the Hudson at the end of the week, unless she should need him before. A brief note to Dorothy, too, saying he is sorry he cannot attend the promised party; and he has caught the eight-forty-two for New York.

Our Sammy has had but little sleep this last night. The task of justification has been more difficult than he had supposed. Little waves of emotion have crept in and upset him many times just when he has been sure that at last he is settled in his mind. Somehow, even yet, he cannot erase from his memory the picture of Carrie on the divan, with her twisted hands.

His state of mind is all that he could ask, however. He is raging with injustice. Not raging enough to withdraw his play, of course. He tells himself that he owes the thing to Sylvia, and must keep it out for her sake even if he were convinced that he should

withdraw it. And he is not. The injustice is the thing that hurts. To say that he has sold himself to Mammon, simply because he has written a successful play that a young lady with little experience of life does not care for! It is preposterous!

The morning papers have not said anything like that. "For sheer genius, we have not seen the like of this first play of S. Sydney Tappan in many a day," the *Democrat Herald* has said. "The marvellous ability of Sylvia Tremaine," is commented on also. And the "daring art" of the Lion Skin scene, "without one word that could be construed improperly!" Oh, those words! Sammy has pored over them a thousand times for each one—they could not be improper. And the *Daily Sun*: "The majestic lesson of this study in feminine character is profoundly set forth! The truth which daily surrounds us is here bared to our gaze quite mercilessly, with a touch, however, as clear and distinct—we were about to say as beautiful—as a cut diamond!" And later: "S. Sydney Tappan's artistic vision has gone to the root of the matter with almost superhuman insight. Only G. Bernard Shaw, among contemporaries, has pointed a keener moral. Those who saw but a scantily clad lady upon the stage in that final scene which gives the play its name, and which will rank with the best efforts of Brieux, Sardou, or Granville Barker, have indeed but a surface glimpse of things. It is but the outward necessary symbol for the profound though perhaps unpalatable truth which the play drives home—the wages of sin, however attractive, is indeed death!"

The reporter—I beg pardon—the critic for this *Daily Sun* is given over a trifle to the deadly platitude I fear; but the applause has been sweet to our Sammy's ear. He is surprised, also, to find these artistic apologists for his Lion Skin scene. He is clever enough to realize that this is all that is necessary to make the thing a complete success.

All the world will come if the play but have a

purpose, and still allows Sylvia to do without her clothes!

What will Carrie say when she reads these notices this morning, he wonders?

Well, Carrie has said nothing. She has read them with little quizzical frowns wrinkling her forehead. They but confirm her opinion of the *Democrat Herald*. The critic for the *Sun* she knows, and does not care to read what he has said. He has confided in her once that a little vaudeville in Grand Opera would lighten up the gloom; but has had a vaudeville sketch refused since then, and now goes in for higher thought and William Winter when his copy gets behind. So that she does not think his criticism will be worth much.

She has risen this morning with just the tiniest of lumps in her throat. Will Sammy call her up, perhaps? It has been her only thought as she dresses, and comes to the table to read the criticisms. It has not occurred to her yet what her mother will say when she finds out the truth.

Mr. Schroeder has been occupied so far with the stock market page, but he puts it down for his coffee, as Carrie comes in, with a vague sense that he is neglecting something. He has slept through a great deal of the play the night before; through most, if the truth be told, except the last-act scene. He recollects now that his daughter here must have been vitally interested in the thing's success. He is a strange father, this Mr. Schroeder. He has been so accustomed all his life to viewing his offspring as incompetents, that he does not always remember now to treat them and their ideas and aspirations with the respect that reality demands. Somehow, he still retains the impression that they are all playing at life. Business is the only real and vital existence there can be. Even stocks are a light relaxation.

"Pretty strong, wasn't it?" he volunteers. He is referring to the play.

Carrie nods her head.

"Yes," she answers.

"Well, it will go, all right enough," he says. His manner is what one might expect of Will Shakespeare to some modern lesser dramatist. "That's what they want. Stuff with a little spice!"

Suddenly the really interesting side of playwriting occurs to him.

"How much does young Sam Tappan get out of that a night, do you suppose?"

It is probably the first time he has ever asked for information from his daughter. Carrie shakes her head.

"I don't know," she answers. "I didn't think to ask."

For a moment Mr. Schroeder cannot believe his ears. Did not think to ask! Where was she all evening? He is saved from complete collapse, however, by his wife, who has entered the dining-room in time to hear the question and its answer. Curiosity has roused her from her bed an hour earlier than usual.

"You'll learn to ask, quick enough," she says, acidly, "after you are married."

There is no halfway station in Mrs. Schroeder's mind. Her daughter either does not speak to this Sam Tappan, or else she is about to marry him.

The humour of the reversal of form does not escape Carrie. She can even smile a little, as she answers, though it is an odd little smile.

"We aren't going to be married, thank you," she says steadily. At least she will never let them know the depth of her feeling on the subject.

Her mother stares at her as at some escaped lunatic.

"Well," she says. "For the Lord's sake, why not?"

Is there no end to the idiocy of this girl? That she herself has changed she does not consider at all strange. She has had very good reason. The young man apparently will be able to support her daughter now, and give her what she wants; a prime requisite in a husband these days of high prices in the stores. That her daughter may have good reason, too, she does not consider for a moment. The first idea which always pre-

sented itself to Mrs. Schroeder, in any human affair, was that the person was a fool.

"We have agreed to differ," Carrie answers quietly.

"Over what?" her mother cries.

Mr. Schroeder is looking at his paper again. This sounds like a row to him. He will not be involved. But Carrie does not answer for a moment. This table is the last place in the world where any one will ever understand.

"Excuse me, mother," she says then, quietly. "We've decided not to discuss it. Do you mind?"

And she leaves the table and the room, before the tears can come into her eyes and betray her to this family in whom she never can confide.

In Mrs. Schroeder's eyes, however, despite the mounting anger induced by the knowledge of her useless change of ground, there is a strange new light. For the first time she has realized that she is a stranger to her daughter; and the knowledge is not sweet. In spite of her hardness, she is a mother still. And this girl who has just left the room to keep her sorrow to herself was once a child within her arms. Can it be that she herself has failed in her duty? An idea no sooner entertained than shown to the door by Mrs. Schroeder. She has done her best. Carrie has always been a trifle odd!

But does she mind this calm dismissal of this important subject by her daughter? Of course she minds! She is dying with curiosity to know the reason for the sudden catastrophe before Carrie has even reached the stairs.

Well, you had best prepare yourself for resignation, Mrs. Schroeder, because you will never understand; would not, indeed, if the explanation were to be given you this morning—which it is not.

In only one mind in the house is there unquestioned loyalty for Carrie. Annie will never question this action of hers, even though it is directed against Sammy. Annie has lived these five years with the Schroeders now, and it has been sufficient to form her opinions.

Whatever Carrie does is right. This disagreement is only temporary; there can be no one like Sammy; and there is but one Carrie. What a strange world if servants told every one the truth! Annie is the only one who will ever know the real reason for this disagreement, though even to her it will always be a hazy and strange affair.

In the upstairs hall, now, Carrie is sitting by the telephone, a little queer look in her eyes. She has just called the Hotel Mohawk, and they have informed her there that S. Sydney Tappan has checked out, and left his New York forwarding address. He has gone!

For a moment she could wish she had not called. It has been a comfort to feel that he was still within call, in the same city, and that if she would she could still take back all that she has said. Take it back! She realizes, with a tiny shiver, that it is not a thing one can take back, any more than one can change the colour of one's hair or eyes. These are basic convictions which she and S. Sydney Tappan have been expressing for the first time; and there is no change possible. Is this what they mean by incompatibility of temperament? She has always conceived of that, somehow, as meaning throwing things! Perhaps, after all, there are worse missiles than ornaments to hurl.

Of a sudden, the list of entertainments to which she has been looking forward shrink again to that dull gray which has been for her the prevailing colour of society since Sammy went away. Will this be the colour always now; her life a monochrome in streaked drab? She realizes with a renewed force how out of place she is: these things of wealth, with which she is surrounded, mean nothing to her, never have, in fact; in spite of her ability, as phrased by her mother, to always pick the most expensive thing—they are without shape or semblance to her. What a pity some one else could not have had her place in the world! When her one endeavour seems to be only a ceaseless effort to escape the good things which fortune has heaped up for her; to

escape, not because she does not appreciate how favoured she must be in comparison to most of humanity, but because she resents the world they create around her—a world of things with but one inspiration, the gathering of more.

It is not the first time that she has rebelled against this wall of dead, intangible materialism, feeling her very spirit overborne by this weight of things, mere things; all chance of sharing in the real soul of the world denied her by a mass of shoddy in which the only splendour is the price tag, the only strength the price. Things! Or is it, after all, the narrow spirit behind the things against which she is moved so to rebel? And could these same things be glorious, shining with the promise of a great splendour to come? Things! The fruit, in this age, not of real achievement, but of greatly, magnificently calculated selfishness, the mainspring of the modern world. If of real achievement, would she feel the same? There can be no inherent wrong in the piled-up labour of the centuries; it is not dulling to the spirit to ride in motor cars, all mighty advocates of the healing balm of poverty to the contrary. And yet, this girl on Washington Avenue knows that her family has achieved what modern society calls a dazzling success; and the success has ruined them. Is there, indeed, any one who knows more?

In New York, Sammy is tasting this morning the first little fruits of his victory, and in spite of certain memories they are sweet. He does not know yet that there is but one kind of success whose fruit will not turn bitter in the mouth, although the tree is hard of cultivation. He only sees himself lifted from the ruck of mediocrity, the hard rut of poverty, which seemingly runs on forever on the road of industry; sees himself out at last, and up where he can breathe the balmy airs of the woods and flowers of pleasure. And he is glad.

It is four days later, while he is still sulking over that interview with Carrie, that a letter from Ric comes to the West Twenty-ninth Street room. He will move

from here soon now, he is thinking, as he opens the envelope, in the willow chair beside the bureau with the cracked glass. How long ago all that first part of his existence here seems! And yet he is the same, and in the same room where once he and Ric bargained for the weekly rental, while his five hundred dollars buoyed them up. You are not to leave this room just yet, however, Sammy. It is to be the most important spot in all your life. So keep it this morning, a little longer, just for old times' sake if nothing else. You will need it in the future, the not very distant future, either! Ric has written:

"Dear Old Tappy, your telegram has put great joy into the camp of 'The Honeymooners'—meaning Ruby and yours truly.

"You lucky dog! I always knew you had it in you even back in the days of the Dutch Reformed Church—God bless their narrow souls! I would have given up all my feasts on this trip to have been in Melchester with you and slapped old Schroeder on the back. Good God, do you suppose we are really pulling out of poverty, after lo, these many years?

"It seems a year since I was on Broadway; and had crossed the world since. At least wait until I return before you are married. I can't see now what there is to stop you. 'Your Lady in the Lion Skin' ought to be a sure thing from now on, and this old devil of an act seems destined to go on forever. We're striking through to Denver to-morrow, and I certainly am glad. I have a great longing to see old New York and you again. Oh, for some of those Ricotti evenings, Tappy! We didn't have enough of them, by far! I could almost find it in me to shed a silent tear for Lyric Hall to-night.

"I have been thinking over some stuff lately, and I wish you would turn over in your mind a libretto for a musical act to run about twenty-five minutes. I think we could get it on the big time as easily as this one. A real bang-up tabloid light opera. I have a real opera in the back of my head, too, that is going to come out one of these days if I have to go to Vienna, and become a foreigner to put it over. Your industry appeals me! You must have been burning the midnight oil these last few months.

"Does that poor opera of ours ever stir in its shroud? I wonder, would Kane give me a musical show now? Good-bye, and be careful of your Sylvia Tremaine! Her picture shows a roguish eye! Oh, ho! What says Carrie and her honourable parents, now?

"Yours,
"Ric.

"P. S. Ruby and I are not engaged yet. It isn't however—I whisper this—it isn't my fault. *Semper Mutabile Femina Est!* or better, *La Donna e mobile!* Oh, what an educated man that Ricorton is! And so tall and handsome. Farewell.

"Ric."

Sammy puts down the letter with a little smile at the gayety of Ricorton. In his heart, however, there is a little pain called forth by these happy-go-lucky remarks of the once sad-faced musician. Bohemia agrees with Ric. Somehow, he feels, he himself has lost Bohemia. Is it that the future has lost its promise because he has succeeded? Or that Ricotti's and Bohemian dinners are good accompaniments of struggling ambition, but not its substitute? He cannot live and write plays simply to dine better and more often. What is it, he wonders, that he wants from life? In some way, the sense of achievement to which he has always looked forward to satisfy his soul seems to have lost its flavour. Must achievement always be in the future to really satisfy? Or is it that there are different kinds of achievement and this kind is not just what he wants? Has Carrie spoiled this success for him or is all success as hollow—indeed, is there any such thing as success?

He will have quite a fair income now, of course. Well, he will not forget Ricorton. If it had not been for Ricorton and his encouragement in Melchester, he might never have come to New York at all; never have met Matson and through him Sylvia Tremaine. Ric's ability to read at sight has changed the lives of them both. All that he can do for Ric he will do gladly. Poverty has tested his friends, and Ric and Carrie alone have stood the test.

Carrie! He rises abruptly from his chair and makes ready to go out. He does not care to think of her and their relations. Why, he thought that was all settled! And a chance letter, a chance thought has brought it all back raging in his soul. Will she write to him at all, he wonders? Or is it all to end just like this, while they drift apart in silence? Of a sudden he realizes that he

cannot put her from his life; she has been part of it too long; will remain of it until he dies. Well, he must follow his own path notwithstanding. There is no other way for him. And he goes out quickly to the Lambs' Club as if a shadow were at his heels.

It is the next day that Sylvia greets him at her apartment.

"You're in disgrace, Sydney," she says, half humourously, half in earnest, as he comes in. "You write a play for me, and I put it on before the old home Knockers' Club, and you rush back of the curtain and say, 'Don't you think they're going to blush?' and rush out again, and I don't see or hear from you again for five days except a perky little note about some fishy, transparent business in New York. For shame, Sydney! I am angry. Your Carrie could spare you for one second, I should think!"

She looks at him quite steadily. She is not accustomed to being neglected, and the experience is novel—besides not highly flattering to her vanity.

"I haven't seen Carrie, either," Sammy retorts, sitting down before the fire. He is thinking, perhaps, too exclusively of himself.

Sylvia makes a little face.

"I'm not in love with you, Conceit," she says. "It is Carrie's business whether you see her or not. That doesn't interest me. You haven't been to see me! or congratulate me, or say anything! I like being patted on the back as well as any one. You're a pig, Sydney Tappan."

"My dear lady," he says contritely, "I have been very miserable."

"I don't care," she answers. "You didn't die—and that is the very least you could do, with that kind of an excuse."

"I don't mean that I was sick!" he says hastily.

"You might have had the grace to be even that!" she retorts. "I might have overlooked your behaviour then."

"I've been miserable over you," he says. "It's all been your fault!"

She looks at him suspiciously.

"I don't believe it!"

"It's the truth," he replies humbly.

She stands up.

"It isn't the truth," she says. "Go home, Sydney. I won't have it. Either the real truth, or else you go!"

"On my honour," he says seriously. "It is the truth."

She claps her hands suddenly.

"You fell in love with me in the bathing suit!" she cries.

"I saw you in that before," he reminds her.

"So you did," she says. She looks at him a moment. "You must be made of stone, Sydney. Don't you like me just a little?"

He nods his head.

"I do," he says. "I never pretended otherwise."

"I am quite good looking," she says modestly. "Tell me, was Carrie jealous?"

He considers a moment.

"No," he says. Sylvia's face falls. "But she didn't like the play."

"You mean, she didn't like me in it!" she cries. "She was jealous! Oh, and I never even met her! You are a pig, Sydney. I suppose you gave her the impression that I was entranced with you!"

"No," he answers. "She said you had made me over to suit yourself, until I was as willing to sell myself for success as you were—in fact, had!"

"She said that!" Sylvia says, with a little gasp. She screws her face up into a little knot as she thinks. Then she turns to S. Sydney Tappan again.

"Well," she says cheerfully, "I guess she's right. I thought you said she was just a girl."

"That's all she is," retorts Sammy in an injured way. Is Sylvia, too, going to agree with Carrie now?

Sylvia shakes her head.

"She is old enough to be your mother," she says with a little laugh.

"Thank you," says Sammy.

She considers him again.

"Was it serious?" she asks.

"Yes," replies Sammy. "Quite. In fact, we've broken off."

"What!" cries Sylvia in disbelief. "Because of a play?"

"That is the reason I didn't see you. I came down to New York immediately." He hesitated. "You see, the flavour was out of the triumph, somehow."

"Oh, I'm the pig," she says remorsefully. "I am sorry."

She hesitates for a moment.

"People with priggish ideas are usually quite unbearable," she says at last. "It's just conceit, in a way; so provincial—everything is just a matter of experience."

"Carrie wasn't priggish," says Sammy honestly. He cannot bear, strange as it is, to hear Carrie criticised either. "I don't know but what she's right."

Sylvia stares at him in astonishment.

"Then what's the row, my dear boy?" she asks.

"I think it is because I can't do without success," he answers slowly. "But I can't!"

Sylvia shudders.

"Poverty always means being dirty to me," she says, stretching out her silken ankles. "That's why I always keep myself scrubbed within an inch of my life! I couldn't stand a dirty saint, could you?"

"No," he says. "I've been through poverty, and it isn't pleasant."

Poor Sammy. Because he has lost some money, and so has had to deny himself a few things, he thinks he has been through poverty. He cannot conceive to-day, either, of any kind of success which allows one to keep one's soul. His difficulty is that success means a great deal of money to him—money, and nothing else. He

does not know that to all the really great successes the money has been but incidental.

Sylvia stares into the fire.

"Well," she says, "I've made money—and I haven't found much happiness. I am happy when I am on the stage—except, perhaps, in scenes like our bathing suit one. I feel, then, that I am degrading my art. That is all that I have found out, Sydney. No one is happy unless they are doing the best work that is in them."

"It is what Carrie meant, I suppose," says Sammy unhappily.

"It's true," Sylvia says, in a low tone. "Any chorus girl can appear in a bathing suit. Well, I am only a glorified chorus girl, I think. I was one once." She laughs a bitter laugh. "That's the way I got my start. The manager picked me for a Circassian slave, and I appeared in a veil—and little else. I could have had a better part right away if I had wanted to stand for him. But that's my dead line. I have sold everything else for success. I want something left that I can give for love."

She ridicules the world, this Sylvia Tremaine, and yet inside, in her strange way, she is an idealist. All people are, if you can but find the spot.

She realizes now, however, that she is talking too intimately to Sydney Tappan; is in danger, indeed, of giving her inside beliefs away.

"Oh, it's all theory," she cries impatiently. "I wish that I could believe all they teach in the churches. How can I, in my world, or any real, actual world for that matter? Everything would always have to be a compromise! And I don't see any one else doing it, except a few idiots whom everybody does up."

Sylvia is one of those who sees all the martyrs in the past and none at all in the present.

Sammy takes a big breath.

"Well," he says, "I only know that I have one ability—I can write plays; and unless I write them so they'll sell, I will starve! I can't do anything else, so far

as I can see. Particularly when I've gotten my chance at last."

"Yes," says Sylvia lightly. "If you've got a message, Tappy, forget it before you ruin your reputation for writing saleable stuff. The 'Lady in the Lion Skin' is saleable. If you feel you can't make money from such stuff you better go fight in somebody's foreign legion, or work in an office for twenty-five a week. But don't write plays!"

"I guess I'm not quite ready for the foreign legion yet, thank you," he answers. "I'll write for a while yet."

"Perhaps this thing won't last for long, Sydney, anyway," she says, at the door. "Meanwhile, come and see me, and I'll cheer you up!"

Sammy is quite sure it will last, however, as he takes his departure from the apartment, and strolls down Fifth Avenue. As he walks he gazes curiously at the names upon the brass plates by the entrances, the names upon the windows, and over the doors, A beautiful marble street, this lower Fifth Avenue, beautiful buildings, beautiful offices. How attractive our modern commercial world seems in the romance of these triumphs of architecture!

And yet, are they, too, like his play? Behind their artistic fronts does something horrible lurk? Great smelters in far-off Montana, with half-naked workmen sweating beneath travelling cranes, in their ears the crash of levers and machinery, the hiss and swirl of molten metal punctuated by loud detonations as the steam bubbles in the great pouring pots explode with frightful showers of white, burning, blinding metal sparks! Outside, the blue and yellow flats, edged by the desolate sage-brush hills, the distance blurring the wretched shacks of the town, rendering indistinct the foreign names upon the saloons and lunch-rooms, leaving plain and distinct in all the squalor only the huge company-owned store, and the company-owned hotel, where visitors of the owners may be entertained, until

they start their journey back to the green, cool East! Factories in near Massachusetts, the stark mass of wood and glass that make up the buildings rising from the barren hillside and the hovels which edge up to them from the town. Inside, at the far end, a thigh-deep mass of stinking skins from distant Australia, surrounding a small group of low-browed, sweating humanity, who stretch, and sort, and throw them into the humid steam; skins from which the fur will fly off as if by magic beneath the ceaseless scraping of machines in another part of the building, where the dust of filth rises to the ceiling, stifling and choking more half-clad workmen—men here, women and young girls there, and once in a while a child—shrinking, shaping, blocking endless shapes of soggy fur, to the unceasing crash of metal, the interminable buzz of belts, the grinding of machinery, the heat and dust and hideous confusion of the ordered industry of felt hat making!

Are the thousand replicas of these, spread thousands of miles from coast to coast, the sweating parents of these calm marble buildings on lower Fifth Avenue, with, inside, the fine rugs and mahogany furniture? Look out, Sammy, as you think or you may stumble upon your message, and spoil your scarce-won popularity. Your public likes much better half-naked ladies than half-starved workmen. It takes character to think straight.

We know that he has not lost that popularity yet, however, as he sits in the box with Friedman, at the Players' Theatre the next night, and sees the duplicate of Melchester's ovation which New York and Diamond Jim Brady call first night. For it is Melchester over again, only this time on a grander scale. The "Lady in the Lion Skin" has caught on in Gotham.

"We are safe for all the winter, Sydney," Sylvia says radiantly, as they sit at late supper in Churchill's.

All about them men are staring and women whispering, "That's Sylvia Tremaine!" while on the small stage an unhappy young lady with a fine voice but no

stage presence is lending colour to the advertisements for the cabaret.

Hartmann is with them, a trifle amused at the fancy Sylvia seems to have taken for this Tappan. But then, she usually does make a fuss over her new playwright each time. She cannot resist the temptation to make a conquest, is his version of it. For once, however, he is wrong. Sylvia is not thinking of making a conquest at all. She is almost in love with S. Sydney Tappan, and she feels quite sorry for him. He is honest and quite unassuming in spite of his success, and she feels somehow that there is a reality, a reserve force somewhere in him, that these men she has known so well in New York lack conspicuously. She does not know it, but she senses the genius of S. Sydney Tappan, buried for so long, but coming closer to the surface now and destined to burst forth one day and astound even its possessor with its irresistible demand for recognition. To her dying day Sylvia swore by S. Sydney Tappan, though she never acted in a play of his again. It was the great cross of her existence that she could not.

It is as Sammy is walking home, an out-of-place figure in a dress suit so late at night on lower Eighth Avenue, that he realizes his loneliness; that loneliness which seems the peculiar property of New York—the loneliness of great cities. It is different than the loneliness of Melchester; induced somehow by the floating river of humanity which makes up the vast town; added to by the myriads of streets and blocks and buildings, seemingly without end; made tragic by the callous heart of its inhabitants, each intent upon his special aim, and with no time even to bury his neighbour should one fall dead.

He has not felt it so overwhelmingly until now, because he has not been really alone before. In his mind has always been the feeling that Carrie's heart is with him, her letter there at West Twenty-ninth Street, beneath the door, awaiting only his return to give him

her renewed message of encouragement. It is because there will be no letter there to-night that he feels this loneliness pressing on his soul. Will there ever be another letter there from her, he wonders?

He is glad that to-morrow night the banquet for all the cast and managers will be held at Rector's. Sylvia always invites her former playwrights, too, so that it is very much her family affair. Her family, indeed, is what she always calls it. It will serve to fill the time, at least.

It was, in truth, a gay party, that banquet at Rector's. I doubt, too, if any one there contributed more to the gayety than S. Sydney Tappan. Even Hartmann was quite captured, and drank a final cocktail with him out in the bar once the supper was over and the dancing had begun. But through it all there was a little strange expression in Sylvia's eyes. Our Sammy is a trifle too gay, she thinks, as she watches him between times. He quite dislikes petite, flirtatious Marie Marcel, and to-night he is throwing her compliments across the table. In his face is a new strained look that has not been there before. S. Sydney Tappan is not happy. He has taken one or two more cocktails than are strictly necessary for good form. Society always acted like wine upon him, but to-night he has felt the need of a trifle extra stimulant, in order to be gay. He does not wish to be idle for a moment, lest his mind have time for thought. There is no one here to whom he wishes to say anything except in lightest badinage—no one, that is, except Sylvia. And he will not spoil her party.

She slips her arm through his in the taxicab, on the way to her apartment.

"Poor Tappy," she says feelingly. "You're really solemn as an owl, aren't you?"

"The owl," he says quite bitterly, "is a gay and inconsequential bird compared to me to-night. I hope I haven't spoiled your party."

She shrugs her shoulders a little.

"Let them worry, Tappy. They only come because I am successful, I know that. Those in the business, because it's policy—and free. The outsiders, because—well, it's quite *au fait*! I am a public character, an institution, an advertisement, and they are quite devilish, quite devil may care, to know me. They would like to give the impression, if they could, without saying so, that I usually dine in tights, and receive them in a nightie. It is all quite silly. I am not so very different from any other woman, am I, Tappy? Except, perhaps, I am hard. You didn't spoil the party anyway. No one noticed it but me."

He has not taken the trouble to deny that he is unhappy.

At the door he refuses to come in.

"I am very dull," he says apologetically.

He is thinking that perhaps there is a letter underneath his door by now—a late mail. He has not been home since afternoon. In his mind is still that strange, unsettled, nervous feeling which he cannot seem to shake off. Dimly he realizes that he would rather go and see whether there is not a letter there for him, than listen to any amount of condolences from Sylvia. There is something imperative about an expected letter. And sooner or later, he thinks, Carrie will be obliged to write. This is not a tiff that they are having. They simply have agreed to differ. Well, if she does not write to him, he will write to her. He must tell her about the play's success, at any rate. He is made in New York financially. Marriage is not a question of expense any longer. Does she also feel as queerly as he does, to-night?

If only Ric were in town, at least, he thinks, as he pays off the taxicab and mounts the stairs.

As he ascends the winding carpeted stairs, and lights a match, there is a little gleam of white underneath the door. A letter from Carrie at last, he sees, with a strange, little, trembling eagerness; and he lights the gas and breaks the seal. She has written:

"Dear Sammy, I am very unhappy, and wish that you would write to me.

(Ah, Carrie, you always said exactly what you thought!)

"I can't bear to think of you alone in New York without even Ric, and with just the memory of our talk. Please, won't you write to me, just as before? I need our friendship, don't you, too? I can't seem, somehow, to realize that things are different between us, and find myself falling back into the old ways all the time. I know, too, of course, that we could never be happy together. We are just starting on our paths in life and they diverge too widely. Some married people don't go on, or only one does, but with us the unhappiness would come almost at once. We neither of us would wish to stand still. And yet, I think I love you, Sammy, almost the same. Isn't it quite strange? Perhaps I should have pride and mail you back an engagement ring and say all is over between us; but somehow I can't. I don't think it is all over, or ever can be. I know I never can forget you, Sammy. How could I? It would be silly to pretend. They say that years make everything different, but I don't see just now how my life can ever be a married one. I should still be married just the same to you. You have given me enough happiness to last.

"I have been thinking it all out these last few days, hoping, too, for a little note from you, trying to see honestly for both of us just what is best. So I have left 1200 Washington Avenue, as you can see by the paper, and am the assistant resident worker on Hague St. I have been unhappy all my life because I was not living a life that was real at all, or useful either, and I have found, like Stevenson, that the things and amusements of my own class do not amuse me or make me happy. I am out of place. But I am not a genius like R. L. S., and so there is nothing much for me except to do the best I can. Needless much to mention, the family is outraged. You know them well enough to imagine all the details. Just at present there is trouble in the store, too, and many of the disaffected—as father calls them grandly—live in this section. So that he thinks I am giving aid and comfort to the enemy by coming down here just now. But I cannot stand it at home any longer. I only ever could because I was waiting just for you, and felt my life there was temporary. And if I am to help I cannot wait while father straightens out his labour trouble. His whole policy is delay, and I must do what I believe. I won't overturn the world, Sammy, but at least I can be true to my own beliefs.

"I wasn't going to say anything about the play but I find I have to, now that I am writing to you. It would be affectation to ignore it, wouldn't it? I am so sorry that I can't wish it success. I can

make up for it, though, Sammy, by wishing you all the success in the world. I hope you will really find yourself some day. I sound so sure, don't I? Am I quite unbearable? Don't quake, Sammy. I shall never try to convert you. You are so much smarter than I, that you would always win the argument anyway. So I won't enter in the lists.

"But I have a little, well—a kind of vision, I think, that buoys me in my work—I hope you have one, too. Write a kindly play, Sammy, next time, will you? If you can't please me, write one that will make the world's heart beat a little faster. You could do that, I know—I shall never forget those tickets to poor Annie! Good-bye, Sammy—am I just—sincerely yours, now? I wonder.

"CARRIE."

A long time our Sammy sits in the room on West Twenty-ninth Street, staring at her letter. He has lost her, for good, he knows now. And he has no anchorage in the world. There has been practically no religion in his life save when he has been too young to understand. Now, into his mind, as he sits in the lighted room that gives upon the darkened tenements, and listens to the occasional trains upon the elevated road a block away, there comes a tremendous sense of emptiness, of loss. Is this why men say that God is love? Still, Carrie has lost love, and seems to have a vision. What is it then? Has he lost God? Or has he sold Him, too, for success?

Success! Into his mind comes dimly, again, a beautiful marble street.

Well, Sammy, you are not quite ready yet for your task in the world. So I cannot blame you for your obtuseness. You are not shrinking from the ordeal. You simply do not see it. Saul still rules in Antioch.

CHAPTER XIII

IN WHICH CARRIE URGES SAMMY TO THINK, AND RUBY COMES BACK WITH BANTRY TO THE HALFWAY HOUSE

IT is a curious thing to reflect upon the odd fragments of the past which our memories choose to treasure up. We are seldom conscious of any measured sequence of events, except we have lived intensely and view them from a far-removed point of vantage some time later.

Many years afterward S. Sydney Tappan became aware of the gradual trend of events which led to his great inspiration; but it was not until all real connection with them had been removed that he was able to identify each separate happening for what it was worth. And when that day came, Time had already begun its task of dulling all the edges, until the picture no longer stood out clear and distinct to him, and he only realized that he had once been different, and had changed.

So it was in regard to Carrie's letters. He never could remember how they changed and altered, or how his replies—strange, halting replies they were—met the changing argument, until all correspondence had ceased, and they no longer heard from each other. It was partly pride upon our Sammy's part, I think, that final failure of his to answer her last letter. On Carrie's side, I am almost afraid it was a broken heart.

As she went deeper into her work, the very hopelessness of her task only served to intensify in her the conviction that she must never falter. I think she realized, too, the tinsel world in which her Sammy

gilded imitations with the splendour of his gift, while the real world of suffering cried out at his door. That divine sympathy of hers, which finally made Hague Street take her to its heart, seemed to stop short, someway, before it reached S. Sydney Tappan's door. She had less and less patience with him as her knowledge of the world increased, and that first naïve conviction of hers, that the world but needed to be informed to tear the canker of poverty from its soul, gave way to the realization that this knowledge was but the beginning of the bitter fight; a fight made more poignant by the picture of the world of man growing older with each day, a new generation of sorrow and of ignorance coming to manhood and womanhood with each year—a generation to be struggled with anew, helped, guided, combatted, and everlastingly pushed on. Her ounce of inspiration fought ceaselessly with the inert tons of humanity, while only here and there was there an answering flash of light which showed the spirit still was in the mass, and would some day move the whole.

It was the picture of S. Sydney Tappan blowing pretty bubbles, with inimitable genius, for the favoured few to praise, while around him a nation struggled for existence against a monster—it was this picture which destroyed a great part of her old sympathy for him. Through it all, too, there was the bitter feeling of disappointment that the bulk of him was weighing down so lightly on the scales.

It was only when she sat alone, in her tiny bedroom off the plainly furnished sitting-room of the Settlement house, that the spirit sometimes flickered low within her, and she felt sorry, oh, so sorry for her Sammy—yes, and a little sorry for herself. Her Settlement was in a district overwhelmed with little children—what Settlement is not?—and it was always when she had seen a boy with dark hair and brown face, and his legs a trifle thin, that her heart came in her throat, and bedtime could not come too early for her. She

did not blush a little nights, or her heart beat quickly, as once it had in that room of hers on Washington Avenue when she thought of Sammy and the little child their marriage would mean. There was a tightness in her throat, now, and a curious dryness in her eyes, that sometimes lasted until morning had come, and the peddlers were astir.

I think, perhaps, that was why she won all their childish hearts; each one some day might be a Sammy, and she did not want to miss a single chance. Ah, Carrie, what would some of the rest of us not give to have had the children of Hague Street kiss the ground where we had passed! It is a pathetic fact that a small group of little Jewish children from Roumania asked, when they first heard of her in the Settlement, if she were perhaps some relative of God's. Well, I for one think they were not so far from right. We all are in greater or less degree. Carrie only looked up her Great Relative, and never forgot their relationship.

It is curious, too, to reflect that though S. Sydney Tappan might have lived and died content to blow his bubbles had not Carrie been in his life, it was his own personality which finally prodded him into action.

Well, we are not interested, most of us, in things which lie outside our own personal circle of experience. A thousand deaths in China do not stir some of us in any degree approaching the death of a pet dog. It is not because we are flinty hearted and monsters of iniquity, each with a personal devil to be exorcised until we take deaths in China to heart. It is because we have no imaginations. Thus it was that Sammy, in spite of his dramatic soul, was not stirred to action until his personal experiences had egged him on.

It has been said, by supposedly impartial commentators upon S. Sydney Tappan's life, that he had in him the making of a martyr, and that success deprived him of a halo. They are referring, of course, to his later life. The truth of the matter is that it was but the dramatic instant each time that fired him, and

his gift did the rest. He fell in love with the idea, just as he had with the idea of the "Lady in the Lion Skin." There is not one iota of difference. As for the one great sacrifice of his life, I am loathe to tear away his crown, and yet that was the same. If you find me tearing off his wreath, remember it is because I wish to show you the real thing that lay beneath. There was something fine beneath in the end, Sammy, I give you credit for that, at least! It is only that there is always left with me the sneaking feeling that perhaps after all you simply stayed in love with the idea all the time and so it was not hard for you. . . .

Most of Carrie's letters about this time he destroyed in periodic rages. She was too sure to please him who was never sure of anything except the motives of his characters. There were only one or two that he found afterward which brought back vividly to him that time in his life. Why he had not destroyed them, he never knew.

He had moved to the Lambs' Club for the time being, though still keeping that old room on West Twenty-ninth Street, until Ricorton should return, when one of them was brought up to him as he dressed for a late breakfast.

Our Sammy has been tasting New York life a little these last few months, as the little puffs beneath his eyes show quite unmistakably. Let us not be shocked, however. There are worse things to fall back on for diversion than an extra cocktail at Churchill's or Rector's. Sylvia is compelled to lead a fairly regular and blameless life, too, if she is to preserve unimpaired that beauty she sells nightly, and our Sammy has not been leading, in consequence, the wild, abandoned existence which seems so necessary for the popular estimate of the stage.

As he takes the letter from its tray, there is a curious look in his eye. This correspondence has assumed a startling likeness to an argument now, so far as he can see. Is it because neither of them feels that personal

feelings are of much importance when their points of view are so far apart? He is obliged to confess, however, that he has taken to dropping in at the public library for information just previous to writing her each time. She writes:

"I don't see how you can be so blind, Sammy, when you are living in the midst of it, of the most terrible results of it, with the East Side and its poverty so close to you. Don't you ever go south of Forty-second Street? It doesn't sound so to me. I don't believe you could see these children, children, children, here where I am, and know what they must grow up to—and still never lift a hand. If only people knew! I am beginning to see now, however, that it isn't enough just to know. But it is enough for so many of us to work at, just this mere knowing, this new knowledge of what the poverty-stricken soul of a nation thinks.

"It isn't just teaching children to play, Sammy, or showing girls how to sew and economize just for the thing alone. It is so they can face the world, self-reliantly, and not sink lower in degradation simply because they are poor and have no chance.

"I have tried arguing with father, as you say you think should be my chance—tried and failed. He either can't or won't see. He is the head of his companies, and they must produce a good profit to be successful—and that is everything to him. He cannot pay any one a minimum wage unless other industries do, too, because he won't be able to compete if he does. That is why he is fighting the new trade union of the clerks, though I notice the papers quote him as saying that each person ought to be able to work as he pleases, and he himself is capable of running his own business without outside interference. He is very angry at me because I have been helping the girls to organize, also. He doesn't see that they must. They can hardly live on what they get now, and when hard times come I cannot see what they will do. They had no place to meet even, except old Germania Hall with the bar downstairs, until I got a brick block for them across from Hague Street.

"Father declared yesterday he would stop his contributions to the Settlements from now on unless they ceased stirring up trouble. He says I do not realize the harm I have been doing, and have no business working in Settlements at all. I am not so sure but what he will try to have me put out if things go on as they have been. I simply cannot make him out at all. He thinks charity is fine, and yet when I do something real, so that the poor may help themselves until conditions can be bettered, he is furious, and says that I have become a Socialist and Anarchist and I. W. W.—I wonder if he thinks they are all the same? Perhaps I should have helped some one he didn't know, and then he would not have classed me in with the people he thinks throw dynamite.

"I have learned, however, that people do not throw bombs for amusement, Sammy. I know that now. Please don't laugh at these I. W. W.'s. To think that America should sneer at people who give up everything for their ideas no matter what the ideas may be—sneer, too, without listening, so that they do not know what they are saying. You don't know how I tremble for the balance, sometimes, down here on Hague Street. If only people would read their Bible in the present tense, and not way back in Galilee so many centuries ago; read it as they walk through the slums, through the factories, the mines, the cities, read it, and have their Bible classes in the light of this Twentieth Century. I don't see how you can sit down in New York, Sammy, and not feel the desire to help. You have never had any religion, I know, because of your life, and because religion has never had any thrills for you. It is because the thrill isn't in the churches any more, in most of them anyway—it is outside, in the people who are giving up their lives for their fellows, and calling it by all these names—some of them wrong, some of them dimly right, their real standard the name of Christ and the Sermon on the Mount, only all overshadowed, mangled, and embittered by their human failings and the misery of their lives. How will it all turn out?

"The thing to me is that they are trying, Sammy—they are trying to do something about it all. While so many of the rest of us sit quietly at home, or do little things which won't inconvenience us at all. Sitting as you are sitting, Sammy, just putting wrong and foolish ideas into people's heads——"

It was at points like this, usually, that our Sammy tore up the letters, to fish the pieces out of the waste basket a moment later and read on to the end. Carrie, like all enthusiasts, was riding her new mission at a gallop in those days. Sammy told her many years afterward that he was nearly ready then to go upon his future way, but that he did not care to be pushed down it. I think he added, too, that he was not sitting, either. He was evolving—as well as the rush of life in New York would allow him—a new play for Sylvia, one which should be a fitting successor to the "Lady in the Lion Skin." How far he really was from seeing!

No, Sammy, you are to have a few more experiences yet before you qualify with Carrie. I do not think, either, that you would have ever started upon your path from the Lambs' Club. Perhaps that is why it was taken away from you.

To-day, however, is not a day for him to bother himself about such matters. Ricorton and Ruby and the Honeymooners are coming home to-day, and Sylvia has insisted upon entertaining them at a little party in her apartment after the play. Ric has never even seen the "Lady in the Lion Skin!" All the Honeymooners are to see the performance, too. There is no one quite so spendthrift as the actor when in luck. So a dinner will be given the rest of the Company, after which Sylvia has donated the tickets to the play, and a midnight supper afterward. A lot of children together, these jolly Thespians, striving to outdo each other in gayety, because all are now successful! Conceit aside, there is something lovable about the people of the stage.

So our Sammy has no time for answering letters this morning, but must finish dressing and hurry down to breakfast. In his heart, though, is a little feeling that might almost be jealousy, when he thinks of Carrie and the young doctors whom she sometimes mentions in her letters. He would be willing to wager a great deal that some of them come to the tenements at her call because she is pretty in her cotton dress! Well, little good it will do them, he thinks cynically, if they are not sincere. She will see through them at the start. Still, there might be one who is in earnest!

S. Sydney Tappan puts the thought from him as if it burnt. On his mind, though, it has left a little mark. He may not always be able to have Carrie for a mere change in his ideas. In his soul, I sometimes wonder, did he ever give her up? Or was he always conscious that she could never love any one but him? It was always exquisite torture to him to even think of her with any one else. If only she had been born without a brain, and so could never have had any of these ideas at all! It was the only point on which Mr. Schroeder and S. Sydney Tappan might ever have agreed.

The quaint Halfway House, with its narrow passage

past the saloon, and the pathetic imitation of a garden which surrounds the green tables in the rear, has seldom housed a more uproarious party, I will wager, than the one that trailed after our Sammy upon the bright afternoon of Ric's arrival. What a commentary upon wealth and its advantages, that Ricorton and our Sammy, with Ruby and Jack Bantry tight between them, spent money gayly for a taxicab to draw them only a few short blocks to the German saloon garden, with its rough surroundings and its five-cent beer drawn from the wood!

It represents pleasure to them and hospitality now, as in the days when they had but the five cents to spend for beer. Ric has longed for this place ever since the act left New York, nearly a year ago. He likes the shouting down the dumb waiter for "zwei bier und kartoffeln!" for "dreibier und pot r-r-roast!"—likes, too, the sweet, fresh-drawn beer and all the free and easy familiarity of the place. A strange mixed crowd in here usually in those days when Ric came before, but none of them here just now, this late June afternoon. But it is New York once more and Tappy, and Ric is content.

Let us go up with the little round German waiter and hear what these four are saying, particularly that stylish-looking girl in gray with the free and easy carriage and aplomb of the stage. It is Ruby, quite fashionable in her tailored suit from Pittsburgh—bought at a sale—and overflowing with gay spirits and good health. Ric, too, is almost impressive in his new dark gray curaway and cane. The contrast between his appearance and this place he has chosen almost before they have alighted from the train, is ludicrous. There is nothing of the aristocrat in Ric, except his taste in music. Only when they speak would we recognize them all as our old friends of Lyric Hall. They have not altered in the slightest degree. Even Ruby's ankles are as plainly visible as ever, with perhaps even a shade more prettily shaped silk stocking

exposed to view. Were there any doubt of the profession of these people, too, the vision of Bantry's checked suit, gray spats, bright shirt, panama hat, and natty cane would dissipate it at once. Thespians in luck!

"We can't get much more than a month out of New York, now," Ricorton is saying. They have pounded each other upon the back and S. Sydney Tappan has even kissed Ruby, in the excitement, and they are only able now to settle down to talk. "There's only the Fifth Avenue and the Alhambra and the rest of the city circuit for us, with perhaps a week at Hammerstein's. We ought to get busy right away on the thing!"

He is referring to the musical act which he has proposed to S. Sydney Tappan in his letters. Short, good acts for vaudeville are not easily procured, especially when the time is short.

"You bet!" cries Ruby. "And it's got to be good. We have got to depend on the act itself getting over. They won't pay seven hundred and fifty just to see me, and hear the Gloom here exercise his lungs!" She means Bantry.

"Well, I'm not a specialty artist," the Irishman retorts. "Or I wouldn't be singin' in 'The Honeymooners,' would I? I'd be a single and book myself."

"You'd pay yourself a million dollars a night, too, wouldn't you, Jack?" asks Ruby maliciously. This masterful Irishman attracts her, even though she sees through him. There is something about his personality that magnetizes her. Is it his never-ending pursuit of her that hypnotizes her at times? She is clever enough, too, to realize that it is but the nature of the man; that were she any attractive woman it would be the same. A man of his passions, this Jack Bantry, whom Ruby would do well to leave alone. There is something irresistible to her, however, about the idea of tantalizing him. His conceit is seemingly so bullet proof.

S. Sydney Tappan has never looked very closely at this Irishman before this afternoon, either, but he

realizes also, as he sits opposite him now, that there is a sort of moodiness in his manner. Is it jealousy, he wonders? That inevitable accompaniment of all success in the artistic world! Well, it may well be. S. Sydney Tappan has been in this business hardly more than a year and has climbed well to the top already, without those seasons of discouragement that dog the actor's career; without running the gauntlet of cheap theatres, without the one-night stands in second-hand plays, the hand-me-down comedies with songs, the months of unemployment, the under parts in musical productions, the fill-in weeks at starvation wages in the three-a-day, the days of waiting in agents' booking offices, the summer stock in Maine or the Middle West at half salary—these unpleasant, unavoidable accessories of the actor's life have not fallen to S. Sydney Tappan at all—and yet he has won success. What can it be but luck to this Jack Bantry, with his Irish temper? Jack Bantry's God is luck. Whoever succeeds or fails does so by luck. This is why he feels to-day the envious disdain of the half-educated professional conscious of his practical experience and overrating it, for the knowledge of the mere amateur who has scored by a fluke.

To Ruby, however, this manliness adds a touch of masculine aggressiveness which attracts her. There are times when the tall musician with the thatch-like hair does not seem quite masterful enough.

Ricorton's eyes blaze a little, nevertheless, as Ruby gives Bantry a provocative glance from beneath her half-closed lids. He is never quite sure of her when the Irishman is around.

S. Sydney Tappan, however, is quite unconscious as he outlines his idea to Ric. He is speaking of their old opera.

"There are at least six good numbers in the thing," he says enthusiastically. "We'll take them, build a short romantic Oriental story around them, put in about six lines of recitative dialogue and action for the

principals between, pantomime for the chorus, get up a bang-up Asiatic setting, with a rose-trellised window for the serenade and duet, add a minute overture, figure out a climax, and put on the 'Rose of Asia,' a light opera in thirty minutes. How does it sound?"

"Immense!" cries Ric warmly.

"Too high brow," says Bantry. "They want comedy stuff in vaudeville."

"You'll furnish that, Jack," says Ruby with a grin. "It will be all right, Tappy, if you dress the thing up for the women—gorgeous costumes, settings; and chiffon and bare legs for the chorus. That gets the men."

"Our chorus wouldn't get a college kid," says Bantry cynically. "The voices never seem to have the legs."

"Oh, forget it, Jack, will you?" cries Ruby impatiently. "You ought to live in a cemetery." He is extraordinarily gloomy to-day.

They can get the score of the opera from Kane's office that afternoon, they decide, and start work upon the act right away. It will take about three thousand dollars to do it rightly, but should be a good investment.

As they go to the great Kane's offices for the score, however, and find it on the second floor behind a piano, let us stay behind and listen to this girl in gray and her Irishman. It is some two hours before the dinner for the company, and Bantry does not seem to be enjoying the prospect. He is staring moodily at the green table in front of him, as Ricorton and Tappy go up Seventh Avenue.

"I think I'll not go to-night," he says. I wonder does he say this because he cannot bear the thought of celebrating some one else's triumph?

"Please yourself, Jack," Ruby answers lightly. She knows his moods by this time. "You always do anyway."

He turns to her with that strange intensity which always seems to give her a tiny thrill.

"I believe you don't give one continental damn, Ruby," he says.

"About you?" she responds contemptuously. It is a queer fighting spirit this mood of his arouses. Does he never think of anything except himself? "Go tell yourself a joke. You've been grouching around for weeks. Quit bein' so sorry for yourself." She knows this will enrage him. Somehow, she is never satisfied until he is mad.

"Oh, hell!" he says angrily. This girl is the devil. What is it about her that keeps him chasing her? She isn't so cursed attractive.

I fear it is because you cannot dominate her, Mr. Bantry, and so will not give up. There is in your mind no thought of marriage, however. Mr. Bantry leaves marriage for those who care for it. He does not care to be anybody's meal ticket. No one shall be a drag upon the career of John Herbert Bantry, Baritone, late of Covent Garden, London, England. This handsome Irishman wishes to succeed; and measures everything by his desire. Is there, indeed, any one left in these days of haste who does not care about succeeding? He is but following the fashion of the century.

"Let's cut this thing to-night," he says, now. "Cut it, and go have a quiet little dinner by ourselves down on Tenth Street."

Ruby shakes her head.

"I promised Ric I'd go," she says. "Anyway, I want to see what Tappy's done. Aren't you keen for Tremaine?"

He gives a scornful grunt.

"Chorus girl with a figure," he says. "I knew her when she was pulling down about twenty-five a week."

"She must have brains then," says Ruby. She says this, too, because she knows it will not please Bantry.

He gives a scornful laugh this time.

"She's wise," he says. "If you call that brains."

They are alone now in this back garden of the Half-way House. Suddenly Bantry reaches across and takes Ruby's hand.

"Listen," he says intensely. "You come with me.

Throw over Ricorton for once! I knew you before you ever set eyes on him and his Tappy."

Ruby looks up at him coolly.

"Forget it, Jack," she says. "You're jealous, that's all."

Her coolness enrages him.

"You've been crazy about me before, Ruby," he says passionately. "I know it, I've felt it. I've fascinated you, got you going—like that night at Elitch Gardens in Denver, don't you remember? I could tell it in your eyes!"

A little flush steals into Ruby's cheek, and she fumbles with her gloves. There has always been something about Jack Bantry which makes her pulses tingle.

"You aren't like all the rest, Ruby," he goes on. "There is something about you that makes me mad to rouse you—you're so cool!"

"Am I?" she murmurs. She is not so self-possessed as she was a moment since.

"By God!" he says hoarsely. "Haven't you any feelings at all?"

Her cheeks burn a little now, but she looks at him easily, her flushed chin in her hands. Did he but know it, there is a tempest within her.

"You don't even miss a matinee on this stuff, do you, Jack?" is what she says, however.

She cannot be indifferent to his masculinity, this girl with the sensuous eyes and firm lips, he thinks. There seems to be a contradiction somewhere in her, however; her eyes and manner speaking of impetuous desire which all the rest of her seems to hold in leash. She has felt the hot strength of it at times, and it has frightened her. She does not always trust herself any more. Why is it, she wonders, that she is never satisfied, these days, until she has roused the man beside her to danger pitch? It seems to have a fascination for her, somehow. Is it the danger that attracts her? Take care, Ruby—you are playing with a world-old fire, and many have been scorched before now!

He has disregarded her last remark, however, and put his hand upon her arm. The touch of her sends a cloud to his brain.

"By God, I don't see how you can help feeling something," he says in his low, hoarse voice. "You can't, I tell you——"

She stares into his eyes almost as if hypnotized, until she feels her heart beating strangely. A moment only, and then the spell breaks.

"Svengali!" she laughs, though there is a little catch in her throat that makes it difficult. "You missed your rôle, Jack, try it on some one else——"

She looks at him with a fine assumption of coolness.

"Any little girl will do for you, Jack, and Broadway's only a block over!"

"That's a lie, Ruby, and you know it," he says hotly. His passion has mastered him now. "It's you—you!"

There is no one in the little garden to see him, now, as his grasp closes tightly upon her arm. Almost in an instant he has crushed her to him, beating down her struggles—lasting a brief moment—his brain on fire. Just an instant, too, that her lips crush themselves upon his, her whole self thrilling with the contact; and then she has risen breathlessly, her hands clinging a little to the table for support.

"By God, Ruby! I knew!" he says hoarsely.

The blood has rushed again to her face as she pulls on her gloves, however, and she looks at him with a little smile of deviltry.

"Did you?" she says lightly. It is only the next instant, and yet she apparently has changed completely. "Why, I thought we were just having a stage kiss, Jack!"

A narrow escape, she is saying, trembling a little inside. The tempest has frightened her again. It is with a great effort that she is appearing calm and indifferent.

"That was no stage kiss," he says.

"You know! You have had all kinds of experience,

Jack!" she retorts. In her relief at being safe again, it does not occur to her to be angry.

He eyes her a moment, anger flashing in his gaze.

"All right," angrily. "Go on to your dinner! I'll stay here, I think!"

She tilts her hat to a slightly more becoming angle.

"You were always tactful, anyway, Jack," she says artfully.

"You mean I'll be in Ricorton's way to-night!" he says savagely. How easily she plays upon him!

"No one mentioned Ric," she answers airily.

He takes a step forward.

"Are you going to marry him?" he asks.

She laughs lightly.

"Oh, who'll be the next President, Jackie?" she returns. "Come on. It is time for the dinner, now."

He stares at her a moment, half resentful, half conscious of being chaffed.

"Come on," she says placatingly. "Don't spoil the evening. It's going to be a swell party."

And a moment later he has followed her down the long passage to the street, and they are headed toward Broadway and the restaurant. New York does not exist for an actor below Washington Square or above Columbus Circle, except in tiny fragments.

It is after the party is all over, and S. Sydney sits in front of Sylvia's divan, the door downstairs closing on the rest, that Sylvia speaks her mind.

"I like your Ric," she says, sitting cross-legged, under the lamplight. "He is real. He will do something, if some one doesn't take him in."

S. Sydney Tappan agrees.

"He is soft hearted," he admits. He hesitates a moment. "How do you like Ruby?"

Sylvia steals a little glance at him.

"Is she engaged to Ric?" she asks.

Sammy smiles.

"I think so," he answers.

"Then she isn't quite on the level," says Sylvia. "I noticed her with Bantry."

Sammy is amused.

"You are feminine after all, aren't you?" he cries. "A rival in attraction! I guess you are all alike!"

"You're a pig, Tappy!" Sylvia retorts hotly. "What a thing to say! Why should I care what Ruby Williams says to Jack Bantry? I knew your friend Bantry once. I'm giving you my opinion, that is all."

"And you think Ruby flirts?" he queries. He has never found anything before with which to tease Sylvia Tremaine.

Sylvia sniffs.

"Of course she does. A woman could see it in a second. Oh, you men! You are so easily taken in!"

"Why, I thought her quite attractive," says Sammy adroitly.

Sylvia looks at him pityingly.

"You are like them all, aren't you, Tappy? A pretty face and attractive figure!"

"Well, they aren't to be despised!" retorts Sammy. "Particularly by Sylvia Tremaine."

Sylvia sweeps the floor with her courtesy.

"Darling Sydney!" she says.

As she closes the door behind him a little while after, however, there is a meditative look in her eyes. Good heavens, is she starting to be jealous of every woman with a speck of charm who comes near S. Sydney Tappan? She inspects herself quite closely in her mirror as she undresses. Does she really distrust Ruby Williams, as she has said she does? Except for that tiny feeling in her heart would she have said the girl was an impulsive creature, generosity personified?

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH A DEPRESSION PLAYS THE DEUCE WITH THEM ALL, AND SAMMY HEARS SOME MUSIC

IT WAS three months after Sylvia's party that the "Lady in the Lion Skin" was suddenly withdrawn from the Players' Theatre after only one week of its much-advertised fall run had been completed; withdrawn, even after a summer's rest, to pine away in the shadow of neglect, dragging out a miserable existence in stock years later, and dying finally in Wichita, Kansas, at the hands of a summer company from St. Louis.

Before any premature applauding is done, however, let me hasten to add that it was not S. Sydney Tappan, urged on by a tardy conscience and Carrie's prayers, who withdrew it. Its withdrawal was but one of the many thousand results of one of those periodical storms of industrial depression which seem to sweep over our economic world every so often—storms for which no one can seem to find either explanation or remedy except the economic heretics and cranks to whom, very properly, we do not pay the least attention. We must be consistent, even if we have the storms.

Indeed, it is only occasionally, when one buys a paper-covered book from some gentleman upon a barrel, and reads it to see what possibly could have induced the man to mount his keg, that we can see these explanations; and have, perhaps, a moment or two of doubt of the smooth gentlemen from whom we usually derive our economic inspiration. For they seem quite reasonable, these theories, strangely enough, until we have discovered their name. Single tax! Socialism! They are done for then, of course, and plausibility, weirdly

enough, becomes insidiousness. The power of a name!

Chambers of Commerce, however, and associations of manufacturers do not buy paper-covered books from gentlemen who so far forget themselves as to stand on barrels. So, I suppose, they are immune from the general doubt. The slums are not yet crowded enough to suit their boosters' committees, not enough attention given at Washington to the special needs of their prosperous businesses. The leaders of the workingmen, these business men! They will lead them to prosperity! Well, hardly. Each man leads himself in industry to-day. It is only once in a great while that we find a man who can forget his own personal profit long enough to stand upon a barrel and offer us an explanation of our ills.

The particular depression which played the deuce with our Sammy, however, did not seem to differ very much from any of the others we have all seen, except in its duration. In this respect it displayed a perseverance which would have earned it a high mark in almost any vocation. Industrial depressions strike at the theatrical business as with a dagger, and the "Lady in the Lion Skin" was among the early victims of the knife. It was not that the fear of God prevented temporarily embarrassed people from seeing Sylvia Tremaine while they still flocked to see Maude Adams or Forbes-Robertson. It was the financial condition of Messrs. Friedman and Marshall that forced the issue. The tour of their companies through the industrial towns of Ohio, Pennsylvania, and part of Indiana seemed destined to bankrupt them, when taken in connection with conditions upon the Pacific Coast and the Northwest.

Gentlemen who mine coal by weight, or work in steel mills at so much per hour, or spend their waking hours in potteries or factories can only buy back a certain fixed percentage of what they produce, if a profit must be added to the price before they can buy it. Once, then, our wealthy friends have been surfeited with everything that can tempt money from them, there is little left for

us to do but look abroad. We will sell them all that remains! Wherefore our Open Doors, our Foreign Markets, our Tariffs—and our Troubles. Whether, in this particular depression, our foreign market has failed, or some diplomatic European neighbour has taken it for its own exploitation no one knows. The only phenomena visible are that the merchants' stocks do not move, because their customers apparently are hard up and cannot buy, and so the factories must shut down and throw more possible purchasers out of work—a vicious circle without end. Possibly, upon this occasion when our Sammy has been robbed of his "Lady in the Lion Skin," we have been playing the part of some one else's foreign market and have failed them at the wrong moment!

It was the wrong moment for S. Sydney Tappan, at all events. The people had no money for the theatre that winter.

In vain Sylvia scolded, wept, and pleaded, ending up with the name of nearly every creature in the Zoo. Friedman remained obdurate for once, resting heavily beneath the name of Pig. No, she would have to play in Boston, in a revival of "The Betrayer." She had never played Boston out in that. The offer for the Players' Theatre was too good to refuse, considering the frightful losses of their other companies. There were no royalties upon "The Betrayer," and S. Sydney Tappan was receiving 6 per cent. She could revive this "Lady in the Lion Skin" next season. It cost some three hundred dollars less a week to run "The Betrayer" also. It was insanity to do anything else, in view of conditions.

It was with tears in her eyes that she told S. Sydney Tappan.

"Isn't it just too mean!" she cried rebelliously. "After I got you to write the thing for me. A paltry twelve thousand dollars in royalties! It makes me sick, Tappy. The Pigs!"

And she shook her strong little fist at the absent Friedman.

But the depression is creeping daily, now, from the in-

dustrial districts first, into the big cities and then the towns; hardly felt, as yet, in those villages which can be called farming communities, and which have not yet been enough affected by our industrial organization to feel its ills, real or manipulated, but which read the newspapers and hang tight to their purses at the first headlines of panic. Old men with independent incomes from wheat lands in the Red River Valley, or alfalfa fields in Kansas and Nebraska, cornfields in Iowa, or apple orchards in Oregon or cattle on the green, undulating foothills of Wyoming, or mines in rugged Montana—old men sitting now in Mason City, Iowa, Decatur, Ill., Manistee, Mich., Owensboro, Ky., sitting and gossiping with other men whose incomes flow from railroad bonds and coal road bonds, or steel and copper stock, with here and there a real industrial of the commercial East; the East of chimney-spotted New England, sooty Pennsylvania, garden-raising New Jersey, spectacular New York—these men are curtailing all their purchases, and the expenditures of their families, until the iron ring of depression is welded tight, and newspapers all over the country from Galveston and New Orleans to St. Paul and Seattle get out desperate slogans, "Buy it now! Do your shopping now!" and other worried gentlemen, in clothing factories, in automobile shops, wonder if their new advertising, their latest bowing before Mercury—to whom, they recognize, all mankind is paying homage to-day—can still be used. Prosperity Overcoats, Symbol of Success Motor Cars, Men of Means Scarves, Prosperous Gentlemen's Cigarettes halt a moment just before the launching, while their sponsors scan the commercial sky and resolve, the next time, to vote some other ticket.

Twelve thousand dollars! It seems like a great deal of money to S. Sydney Tappan, though not so much as it would have a short time ago. Eight thousand of it, however, has not been paid, and there are ugly rumours of a receivership for Friedman and Marshall. The show business is uncertain. Our Sammy, too, has

nearly three thousand dollars in the "Rose of Asia," which has reached rehearsal stage, and wants but two weeks before it is ready for the booking agents to look at. "The Honeymooners" has just finished playing its final run at the Alhambra and is upon the shelf, after having made our Sammy some twenty-five hundred dollars in the course of its varied career.

He could wish, however, that his financial condition were a trifle different in view of the rather dubious outlook just ahead. S. Sydney Tappan has not been playing the part of a hermit these months, and does not seem to have a great deal more actual cash in hand than when he came down to New York some sixteen months ago. He will need the six hundred dollars he has in the bank if this depression holds for very long. Ricorton will not be much help. The musician seems a great deal like a child with the world for his nursery. He and Ruby have but little money now even after a successful season in vaudeville. They have spent the greater part of their savings during the summer. It seems characteristic of the artistic temperament; the morrow can take care of itself. Well, usually, the morrow can be no worse than to-day—and perhaps that is the reason.

I think, however, that you are going to be glad that you kept the second-floor room on West Twenty-ninth Street, Sammy. The hallroom now is vacant, too, for Ruby. The lady who giggled so at night has been taken from the river at Twenty-third Street—and left a month's rent unpaid. That was M'sieu Clouet's only addition to the reporter's story in the *World*.

It may seem strange to some of you that Carrie should have heard of the withdrawal of the "Lady in the Lion Skin" and not have known the real reason why. Well, they do not need to read the newspapers in the Settlement districts of Melchester to know that a depression exists. It is a grim reality spelled in words of hunger and despair. Carrie had not had time to read newspapers for some two months before

the "Lady in the Lion Skin" was withdrawn. She might not have known it then had not Mrs. Schroeder brought her the clipping from the local dramatic news from New York. A brief sentence or two it was, saying that the "Lady in the Lion Skin" had been withdrawn for the present owing to certain difficulties, and that Miss Tremaine would appear again in Boston in "The Betrayer," as a result.

The spirit in which Mrs. Schroeder brought it to her daughter would be hard to describe. It was such a mixture of pride, and curiosity, and affection, too. Since her daughter left the house on Washington Avenue for this gloomy Settlement—it is gloomy to Mrs. Schroeder—she has not been quite so sure, quite so dogmatic in her ways. Dimly she has realized that this Settlement and S. Sydney Tappan and the "Lady in the Lion Skin" and her daughter are all bound up together in some odd way. Just how, she does not know, but she is wondering. An essayist has said that after thirty-five a great many of us humans close the blinds of our intellects, and go to bed. If this is true, Mrs. Schroeder is up again and peeking out the blinds. Her successful spouse, however, will sleep on until they fire the house beneath him.

In Carrie's mind there comes a great tenderness for Sammy, as she reads the little news item. There is not a moment's doubt for her as to the reason why S. Sydney Tappan has done this thing.

He has decided to be some one in the world, after all! She hopes he does not think, however, that it is enough merely to withdraw this play. That is only a beginning of retracing all his steps. He must do that, of course, before he can step out in the right direction; but he must not stop with a withdrawal! The little hurt she has felt, at first, because he has not written her about it is quickly assuaged by her pride in his achievement. She writes him:

"Dear Sammy, I haven't any words in which to tell you what I think of your withdrawal of the play. I only hope

I haven't hurt you too much in what I have said about it. You can have no conception of what a feeling it gives me to know that your name is no longer before the world beneath its title. I think it has made me miserable in the past principally because I realized how futile all my efforts for these working girls of mine were, with their ten-cent store jewellery, and sale shoes and cheap underwear, when they could see things like your play. It does not take much to put wrong ideas in young girls' heads. And they are so constitutionally good, most all of them! I wonder if you can see what I mean? My little efforts seem so hopeless against the immense, intangible evil you could wield against me—and did wield, unthinkingly! for I know, of course, that you would never have done it intentionally.

"The fine thing to me, Sammy, is that you could count the cost to yourself of withdrawing that play, and yet do it just the same! That means something to me. You can never know what it does mean to me, even here on Hague Street. I am not expecting you to revolutionize the world, of course; but your influence, exerted in the way you can exert it, will be the equal of the efforts of hundreds of people such as I am. Though we have our mission. There is a part of Hague Street where but one kind of preaching carries conviction—and that is example.

"I won't let loose my enthusiasm on you just yet, however. I still have it in quantity, though—minus that immediate optimism! I wonder do you remember when you first told me about those imaginary hockey sticks you said people put in your stockings for Christmas? That is just the way I feel about all the unthinking people who are doing so much harm, so heedlessly. The Meanies!

"At least we had our youth, Sammy, our bright sun-shadowed youth. These poor souls among whom I live never seem to have had even that. Just think a moment, of your life, with all its youth left out! It is bad enough in good times, but at present there seems to be a depression, and a kind of suffering is beginning about which I do not dare to think. So many of the shops are closing down, and throwing girls out of work.

"I am in despair about one of my girls, here—Martha Grossman. Poor dear, she seems more sensitive than most to her surroundings. She has been saving for so long to go to the Northfield Conference, 'to see if there is really anything fine or decent in the world!' though on what she has been saving I can't imagine, as she has always done her own cooking, washing, and housekeeping! But she lost her position yesterday, and so will never get to Northfield now, I suppose. We need all our money for real relief. If only she doesn't get discouraged! Their despair is what I fear. You can never know how I hate this depression.

"John Rouse is preaching to all the strikers nights to leave the labour unions and join the I. W. W. I am so afraid that this depression will make what he says ring true to them. Practically

all of the clerks and the girls have joined the new labour union, but it looks to me as if the Federation of Labour will have its own affairs to look after this winter without helping any one new. And the stores won't need their clerks so badly, either. That is why I am so afraid they may believe in Rouse. Why shouldn't they believe him? The doctrine of sabotage, of destruction, is so frightful, to my ideas. And yet how can they think that morality is anything else than hypocrisy, when it doesn't govern anything in the industrial world but conversation? I can't find it in my heart to blame them—our ideas have simply made a hell on earth for them to live in; why should they think them right?

"There is so much for you to do, Sammy! Simply setting people right, showing people how to think. I sometimes think that no one cares to use his or her brains any more. But you could make them think, and make them pay two dollars for the privilege, too. How I hope you will! Anyway, you have withdrawn the play—and I can think of nothing else.

"Ever yours,
"CARRIE."

What a raving Sammy it was who finished that letter, and caught a glimpse of his position! Withdraw the "Lady in the Lion Skin," on his own account, and lose six hundred dollars a week! From where had she gotten this inspiration? The irony of it! A letter of congratulation when he had been holding his head for ten days in indignation at the selfish action of Messrs. Friedman and Marshall!

To his credit, I do not think the idea ever occurred to him of writing Carrie and telling her that she was right, and he had heroically withdrawn it for the reason she had given. Perhaps there was a little memory left of certain letters from college to his mother. And yet, without that memory, I think our Sammy had become too much of a man, then, to stoop so low as that. He always told Carrie the truth. What made him rave the most was that he could not withdraw the accursed thing now, even if he wanted to! Mr. Friedman had done it for him first. There was only left to him the ignominy of writing Carrie and telling her that his heroism had been forced upon him. And that was all! His chance to palliate that bald answer had been taken from him by the depression. It was

one of the only times when he could find absolutely no heroic rôle left to play. Do you wonder that he raved?

It was when his period of raging was over that he sat down and sent a check for fifty dollars to the account of Martha Grossman! At least, she need not miss Northfield if it meant so much to her. He did not enclose a note to Carrie. He was a very queer Sammy.

It was from the check that Carrie knew he had gotten her letter, and she wrote and thanked him for the thing he had done for Martha. He was rapidly retrieving his pedestal in Carrie's mind those weeks of the early winter.

But though he tried a dozen times, he could not bring himself to answer her letter. Several times he even sat down with the pen in his hand, but he had not the least idea of what he wished to say, and no words would come. Some days he was not sure that he would ever have withdrawn the "Lady in the Lion Skin" at all. On others, he was positive that, had the play been still running, he would have telephoned Friedman the moment he got the letter and had the thing taken off. Still others, he wondered when Sylvia would be able to use it again, and what royalty he would ask for when the time came. In it all, however, he knew in his heart that he would never be able to write another play like his first one. Carrie's sentences had sunk deep into his soul, and the zest was gone forever from a drama of that kind. He knew, too, that it was hopeless to try to dodge the issue with Carrie. He could not write and not mention the play or its withdrawal. She would write him at once, in that case, demanding an explanation. It was why he ended up by not writing at all. I think his contempt for himself would have been greater, too, had it not been overshadowed by a fear that grew more menacing to him every day. Would he ever be able to write another play, now that his first one was done for?

He is not worried yet for his future, however, because no definite purpose has circumscribed his horizon.

The steadily increasing length of the bread line at Fleischmann's, the slow increase of all-night lodgers on the cheerless benches of the city parks, the mounting proportion of jobless Thespians upon Broadway, the growing throngs around the soap-box orators upon the East Side of nights, the swelling crowd about the want-ad counters of the newspapers—crowds that hurry in, and slink out quickly lest some one see them, that give their plea for work to the superior clerk with some feeble jest meant to cover and allay the mortifying humiliation of their act—all these have not yet impressed themselves upon his consciousness. The depression is only reaching out its tentacles now, thrusting upward from the tenements of the poor into the world of commerce and of art.

S. Sydney Tappan's first intimation that this vague depression, of which he reads daily in the papers, can become a grim reality to him is when Hagaman announces that he cannot secure satisfactory booking for the new "Rose of Asia" until the storm blows over.

"They're cutting down, Tappy," he says grimly, after one of his daily visits to the United Offices upstairs. "I can't get work for some of my animals even! It's the boobs from the legit that are doing all the damage. They'll work for pretty near nothing just to fill in the time. There is nothing doing all right, for some little while, now. Unless you want to play Poli for four-fifty a week!"

But Sammy will lose nearly fifty dollars a week on terms of that kind, and cannot consider it. Stars with reputation, who will draw on their name, are plentiful since so many road productions have been withdrawn. It is these people who are crowding out the regular vaudeville teams and sketches.

"It's just a case of wait, Claude," he says lightly. He is rather used to having things go wrong, our Sammy. This past year and a half has always seemed a little out of drawing to him. Success is not his natural conception of his environment.

To Ric and Ruby the news, somehow, does not appear overwhelming. So long as Ricorton has money in his pocket he will never worry. In Ruby there is always a tiny thrill of fear when poverty confronts her. She knows the fate of so many of those chorus people she has known since first she left Utica. But she has a deathless faith in her own lucky star, and the thrill soon passes. She has been out of work before, and something always seems to turn up. Mr. Micawber would not seem unreasonable to her. In her mind, however, there is the realization that she is no longer a young girl, as girls are rated upon the stage, and that as yet she has heaped up no reserve of experience upon which to draw, once youth and beauty are gone. She has always played practically the same parts, and trusted to her voice and looks to carry her to success. There is but one safe road for the woman who must stay upon the stage, unmarried, and without exceptional genius: it is the road of character acting—and this as yet she has never followed.

Well, she will make a start this next season, if she can. She is about thirty now, and surely will be attractive a few years more.

She does not like to think of the future, always. There are times when she envies, with an envy that is almost a pain, those girls she once knew in Utica, who have married now, and have homes and children, and a husband who comes home at six o'clock.

That is life, perhaps. Yet they do not seem to think so, most of them. They envy her, and her wide views of life, her freedom and her clothes. She could never marry a man like their husbands. In fact, until she met this fair-haired musician, she has never seen a man she would care to marry. Jack Bantry! Ugh! He is hateful to her at times. Why does she ever have anything to do with him? Marriage with Ric will never be a settled life, she knows, either. He is half genius, half vagabond Bohemian, and his gift will make him little money until after he is dead. He seldom has a

chance to use it these days, too; composing is not aided by banging the piano in a rehearsal hall from ten till six. She feels the tenderness she might have for a child for this tender-hearted man who treats her with such unfailing courtesy, in spite of the tawdry surroundings of their lives. Somehow, she cannot feel poor or second class when Ricorton is around. They are simply poor for the present, standing upon the verge of great deeds! If only she could protect him from the sordidness of their present!

It is a queer feeling, this love for Ricorton that stirs her so. It is seldom passion; and yet she knows how easily it could be, if he wished it above all the rest. It is genuine love that Ricorton inspires in this curiously blended nature of hers. She feels the same happiness, the same safety she can dimly remember experiencing in her father's arms, with now, however, an added thrill. It is only because Ricorton does not press his suit quite passionately enough that she has not married him already. There is a strain of primitive shyness in Ruby, a desire to be surprised, perhaps conquered; an outgrowth possibly of her hot blood, that makes her interpose deft obstacles to his easy conquest. Perhaps, too, this is why the brutal strength of Bantry has such a fascination for her at times. He is elemental, dangerous. How many obstacles can he surmount?

To the Irishman, the news that booking cannot be secured for some time is not terrifying. He has floated now, over almost all the world, and Williamson's, Melbourne, Australia, seems the same to him as Hong Kong, China, Covent Garden, London, the La Salle, Chicago, or Broadway, New York. Life is change, and this is but one of the changes. He does not spend all his money, either. He is thrifty. He has saved enough by this time so that depressions do not frighten him. He will never lend money, this strange Irishman, and in the theatrical profession that is the final word.

It is the flat refusal of Friedman and Marshall to pay S. Sydney Tappan a cent of his eight thousand back

royalties that first awakens Sammy to his situation. His writing has been chaotic lately, and he has no play which he can complete and offer for sale. He is sure that he could sell another like the "Lady in the Lion Skin" to several producing firms if he had it just now. His name would suffice at this present moment, with the other play so fresh in Broadway's mind. But there is something wrong with his dramatic gift these days. He cannot seem to settle down to constructing anything. He has been overrun with details for a long time in staging the "Rose of Asia." Perhaps that is it. And yet, there is something else. He seems to lack inspiration. He cannot take that fancy to any of the ideas which present themselves, the fancy which was always so necessary for S. Sydney Tappan when he produced a thing worth while.

He is worried to-night, as they all sit in the room on West Twenty-ninth Street and make light of their troubles. Perhaps, too, the vague uncertainty with which all his relations with Carrie are now clouded has served to keep him depressed.

"I'll give most of 'em a week!" Ruby is saying. She is flat upon the bed, and is referring to the chorus of the "Rose of Asia." "They'd stick longer for you, Tappy, than for any one else, but they've got to eat!"

"Oh, I suppose we can get a new crowd and teach the thing all over again," says Tappy wearily. It is discouraging, this necessity of starting all anew. The Thespians he has gathered together will have to scatter like wolves for food, if booking is not forthcoming.

Ricorton looks up from the gas plate, where he is standing in rapt absorption over a new dish of his own concoction.

"What do you hear from Sylvia?" he asks.

"She is in Boston," Sammy answers. "The Betrayer again!"

"Remick said they would consider those two last songs I took over there," Ricorton adds as an after-thought.

"I suppose their own stuff gets first chance," Sammy says. He means the song-writers who compose on salary, and whose work belongs to their house. "And it is all such poor stuff, too!"

He stares at the cracked mirror.

"Oh, it all makes me sick!" he adds despondently. "I'm going out!"

He is very gloomy to-night, our Sammy, as he takes his way along Seventh Avenue to Broadway and Forty-second Street. It is very dispiriting to be obliged to put this "Rose of Asia" in the storehouse just when the time for showing it seemed to be at hand. He resents the glitter and magnificence of the lighted streets, of the great electric signs, of the gay theatres, because they hold out no invitation to him. He can go and see almost any of these plays which are holding the boards to-night, by merely presenting his card at the box office; but he does not wish to see them. He wishes to be alone, he thinks. Some place where he can think. It is time he considered seriously this life of his, his present situation. Where can one think in New York?

Let us hold our breaths a little, S. Sydney Tappan is going to try thinking!

The sound of distant violins catches his ear as he passes Sixth Avenue on his way to the library; and he stops a moment, beside the bulk of Carnegie Hall. It is the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra, he sees by the posters. This will be better than the library. He has not heard any good music since his mother died.

They are finishing a suite by Rimsky Korsakov as he takes a seat in the rear, and in a moment are beginning something by Grieg, he does not know what, except that it has the unmistakable harmonies of the Norwegian.

It is an odd Sammy who sits here to-night, and listens to the haunting sweep of the strings. In his mind memories are crowding: memories of nights of childhood when he lay upstairs and his mother sang in the drawing-room below; memories of summer nights on

Hawthorne Street, of evenings in Paris and Vienna and a little boy in a wide white collar hanging over the plush balconies of an opera house, his eyes wide at the wonder workers in the pit and on the stage below him, and in his little soul a great, thrilling resolve—to do it, too!

Yes, there is Wagner, now, upon the instruments of the orchestra before him in Carnegie Hall to-night, the genius of the man sounding even plainer to the world because the years are rolling thick upon his grave. Deathless music! That same music he listened to in Paris so many years ago—listened and thrilled and resolved! The labour of the man! The soul of greatness in an attic! Before his eyes and in his ears the music of eternity! The character of him, the endless patience, the wonder of the vision, world without end! The imperishable faith before a world of pharisees. Before Heaven, a man!

“Tristan und Isolde,” has faded from the orchestral harp before our Sammy, now, however, and in the mounting silence a new melody has started. A strange, broken waltz, that lifts him on with ever-changing variations; melting, shifting chords that shimmer into great crashes of sheer music; blending, softening, then, into a mincing theme with flashes of incandescent beauty lighting up the progressing melody, like showering golden stars upon a dark, ultramarine stream; breaking into the exquisite madness of the waltz strain, now, more and more, until it bursts upon the orchestra at last in matchless, passionate abandon, overwhelming the harmonic typhoon of its accompaniment with the great, swelling sweetness of its cadenced melody! Only the crash of silence tells our Sammy that the poem is over. “Don Juan,” by Strauss, he sees!

Into the soul of S. Sydney Tappan, inch by inch, a deathless thrill is creeping, as he sits entranced, his face tight clutched between his palms, the waves of melody trembling in his brain; a thrill, I think, that is to be his vision. He is seeing the genius of the ages, the inspira-

tion of the centuries, piling up its slow laborious bulk, age by age; emerging from the shadowy path of fabled muses, the aisles of distant endeavour where trod the sons of God; calling forth, each decade, to the living flame in man; striking fire from ancient tinder, now showers of half-remembered chansons which dim minstrels sang, now tiny tongues of flame blazing in monk-scriven records, in inspired crusades, in the Assisan—ever gaining fuel from what it feeds on; lighting now into a blaze that casts its light and shadow far over the world of man—over art in painting, in literature, in music, in sculpture, in architecture, in religion; its flames rising high toward the Heavens through the Renaissance, touching with life the figures of Luther, Stradavari, Palestrina—the brilliant figures of Dante and Giotto still flaming upon the horizon—DaVinci, Dürer, Bach, Scarlatti—by dozens, by scores, by hundreds, by thousands they march, until names are useless, unending, all marching down Tennyson's ringing grooves of change, the mighty bulk of human genius looming higher and higher, adding the talent, the spirit of each generation, as the inspiration of the past strikes fire on the talent of the present, until the flame that lies latent in the breasts of the S. Sydney Tappans of to-day leaps into life, strains madly to reach its Heaven, hot, lambent, wonderful, transfusing the life of the man it inhabits, and joins finally the great sweep of the revealing fire of the ages as the Spirit that is Man goes crashing down the vista of the future!

The memories are gone now from S. Sydney Tappan, and as he rises blindly, and bursts out upon the street, his soul is flashing fire within him. Great music, great books, great deeds, great art, these are the deathless things of man, and their creators the roll of honour in a thousand creeds! His gift is taking flame from the blaze that once was Wagner, once was Ibsen, once was Francis, once was Paul, yes, once was Christ—and before Him, Buddha! The Spirit of God in Man!

I would like to give all the credit to Carrie, as S.

Sydney Tappan's vision floods his soul, and the resolve of Paris, of Vienna, so many years ago, rekindles into the flame which is to light the lifetime of his endeavour; but there is other credit for her. Vision without purpose cannot move the mountain. Soon we can grant Carrie all his purpose. To-night, as S. Sydney Tappan strides on, unconscious of his surroundings, intent only upon this blinding light within his soul, I think the credit belongs to God. He has touched the prostrate talent of our Sammy with the vision of the ages.

Is the day for miracles quite over?

S. Sydney Tappan is entering the path that Wagner trod, to-night. He has fallen in love with the idea of his lifetime; fallen in love, this time, forever. He, too, will give the world to prove his inspiration.

CHAPTER XV

IN WHICH SAMMY GETS HIS IDEA AT LAST

THERE are few things more irritating than to resolve to write something great, and then find an utter lack of subject. It has only a few parallels. Carrie could have presented one without hesitation. The young ladies who resolve nobly to help the poor, and start out to do it! In that case, however, the inspiration is usually a terrible thing for the poor, also.

To S. Sydney Tappan, however, in the weeks following his resolve—a resolve crystallized into a determination astonishing to one familiar with his character—there could not have been given anything approaching the exasperation of this dearth of genius. What, indeed, more provoking than to conclude to do something fine, and then sit helplessly before a stony typewriter, one's brain and inventive genius quite cold and unresponsive! It is well known that the best way never to write a play is to start with the desire to write one, and with nothing else. Perhaps this is why our Sammy spent so many discouraging weeks scowling savagely at his usually faithful typewriter, without a single result worth mentioning.

Always, too, just around the corner from his dramatic vision there lay lurking the very idea which made him famous, finally. Perhaps it was obscured by the swarm of tiny devils of sensuousness which crowded around him in those days, leaping with little malignant grins upon the silent keys, daring him to strike them. That he never did is the best proof to me of the strength of his resolve. There are to be no more Ladies in Lion Skins from the mind of S. Sydney

Tappan. It was the height of irony, the variety of plots of that kind which presented themselves to him in those gloomy weeks. But beneath them all he could see the malevolent grins of the little devils, and he put them from him manfully. He will write the best that is in him from now on, though he may starve in the attempt.

He did not falter even upon the memorable day when the great Kane sent for him, to provide one of his waning stars with a new piece of delicately done suggestion. It was the fashion for some time in New York, that style of drama, and no one more responsive to fashion than our American producers. One rhinoceros drama, if successful, would find, I verily believe, at least nineteen comrades jogging along behind—and that, before the season was half over. "The Lady in the Lion Skin" impelled one of these small waves, and our Sammy's great name seemed promising.

The great Kane's face expressed more than incredulity when he heard our Sammy's answer to his proposal.

"But my dear man," he is quoted as saying. "It is what the public wants!"

To which our Sammy replied that for him, at least, the public could be damned!

"The public just follow after," he said, staring at the great Kane's little nose. "It is for us to pull the sodden mass along a little farther during our lives!"

If he had told him his whole idea I think the great Kane would have rung for an attendant. He did go so far as to ask him what kind of a play he contemplated writing—to which our Sammy had no reply. He had no means of knowing as yet! He was mentally noting that when he did write it this Kane should have the last chance at it. His conception of his own ability was stronger than ever as he took his departure. But he saw a little plainer that his struggle would but have begun once this new play of his was finished. I think he saw it plainer and plainer as the days followed one

another, and the avenues down which others sought fame gradually closed for him. But he did not ever even entertain the thought of giving up, now he had started. His vision always held him to his course.

It was startling how quickly his name and his face disappeared from Broadway. I think he was hardly mentioned three months after he resigned from the Lambs' Club. It was partly, of course, because Sylvia was in Boston. The memories of cities, those of republics, are wofully short, however, and S. Sydney Tappan had vanished completely before even half that dull season was over. It is strange to think that he was in his room on West Twenty-ninth Street all the while. Even had Sylvia been in town, I doubt if his name would have stayed in the swim. Perhaps it was the just penalty he paid for the worthlessness of his work. Money was all that Sylvia's play ever meant; and money is easily spent. I venture to say that in all New York there was not a soul to remark on the passing of Sammy.

There were times, of course, when he nearly despaired; when he sat gazing at his dark tenement landscape in a despondency that Ricorton thought would never lift. For the literary mind there can be no anguish approaching that which lack of ideas induces when ideas are at a premium. It was not aided by the persistent endeavours of Ricorton to play the cornet those evenings, either. It was the only instrument in the orchestra with which he was not upon speaking terms, and he put in the time making its intimate acquaintance. Evenings, now, when S. Sydney Tappan takes down the volume in which "Doctor Paulding" heads the list, I think there are echoes of cornet tones, a trifle off the key, in some parts of the dialogue. I am not sure, either, but what he would give up "Dr. Paulding" in its entirety to hear those notes once more.

When he finally did get his great idea, the idea which runs through all his later work, Ricorton could have rehearsed a Cubist orchestra in their second-floor back

room and our Sammy would never have heard it. There were days then when he never looked up from the manuscript which unrolled itself before his troubled eyes; when Ricorton played the cornet in untroubled peace, and Ruby altered her clothes to meet the changing fashion while Bantry smoked in gloomy silence. An odd quartette, these four. The rented rooms of New York are filled with their replicas, altered in various ways, perhaps, to suit the whims of the Gods of Circumstance, in all else the same.

To Ricorton it was only a matter of time before there would be more shows to drill and conduct, and meanwhile he could write a few good songs and master the cornet. To Ruby and Bantry it was but the common experience of life incidental to the stage. I hardly believe any of them expected the fight for life which the depression entailed, that year, upon the poor of New York. When it had been three months with them, and all hope of employment had vanished until times were better, they had their first, dim glimpse of what the future might hold for them.

The brutal thing about an industrial depression is that it closes all industries at once. The desperate worker has no place to turn for relief, and so must starve with folded hands. It was some two months before this fact became embedded in Ricorton's mind, and he ceased trying for waiter's jobs, for jobs in hotel orchestras, and at the piano in picture shows; gave up in despair and settled himself to his cornet in grim patience, while S. Sydney Tappan's money gradually melted beneath the onslaught of their necessities. In all New York there was no one to buy Ricorton's genius for the proverbial shilling. That it was S. Sydney Tappan's dwindling capital which held all their heads above the waves of starvation but served to intensify the musician's feeling of the ignominy of it all. The hurt of it bit to the quick of Ricorton's soul. A man, and helpless! There were even times when he put away those scores and manuscripts, and said good-bye

to them forever. His father had been right. Art is long, and life is short, and needs money to support it.

I do not think I blame Ruby over much, now, for those evenings she spent with Bantry at the restaurant on Tenth Street. There are times in people's lives when they will sell their souls for the cozy lights and cheap wine of Ricotti's. And there seemed to be a fatal sameness about Ricorton's menus, induced perhaps by lack of funds. Spaghetti is cheapest, and will nourish, too. It lacks variety, however, upon too much repetition.

It is to our Sammy's everlasting honour that, through it all, it never occurred to him that his money would last longer if he had only himself to support. He would have thought as soon of casting these friends of his adrift in mid-ocean as on the streets of New York. I do not wonder that gradually there dawned in Ruby's eyes an appreciation of the strange code of honour of the man who sat writing "Doctor Paulding," with starvation three months ahead, and never stopped even to question the motives of his friends. It is, too, the one dark, ineffaceable blot upon the soul of Ruby that she recognized, and took advantage of her discovery. There were extenuating circumstances, but they could never excuse the deed.

Sammy never knew from what specific thing he derived his great idea. It seemed to come full born, suddenly, from out the kaleidoscopic memory of those nights and days spent wandering aimlessly about the island of despair: memories of icy waterfronts, of warm, evil-smelling saloons, of snow-swept parks of iron and stone, of rags and stumbling horses, all jumbled up with half-remembered glimpses of the world of Forty-second Street which he knew so well and avoided as much as possible. He always remembered just when it came. It was as he sat staring at Ric in the West Twenty-ninth Street room, noting the look of hopelessness in the musician's blue eyes, realizing the fine texture of the

man's soul that felt more keenly every day the sordidness of his defeat.

Poverty! A world of wolves at one another's throats, professing, too, the brotherhood of man; all life a war, all effort turned, not to magnificent endeavour, but toward grinding out a profit from the work of some one else! The beastly survival of the fittest, apologized for by the excuse of man's frailty of soul: necessity the driving power, the greed of the comparative few and not the natural instincts of the many the main-spring; greed, without any possible substitute because of the inherent evil of man's so-called nature!

As in a flash, he saw the reality which men see as in a mirror—all things reversed but still holding their relation; the reality of this Frankenstein of Man, man allowed, man created by the evil passion of the avaricious of ages past, spreading out and down from the feudal ages of Europe to gather in gradually the reins of dominion over all mankind, a great Monster of Environment now, crushing with its mighty bulk the light of all men's souls, creating with its own weight the evil at which it points for the justification of its continued existence, casting the blight of its materialism upon the flowering of man in the centuries since chivalry, the greed of ages past revived by each generation's gluttons, crushing under foot from childhood the tiny light of each man's soul except where some Tolstoi flames despite it, while the religion that was Christ's cries out reprovingly against the despairing deeds of its wracked victims, and shuts its eyes with the strength of Habit against the Monster itself. Man moulded now by the Monster he himself allowed to fatten when the greed of capitalism first emerged from the Middle Ages of the race; not a new Monster fed afresh each generation by the evil hand of Man's ineradicable nature, and so destined to be always with us!

Before Heaven, no—not that! No great deed of the world done for greed! No Wagners starving in their attics for greed! No fine thing of Man done except

for the doing—the race run for the running! All else as dust.

You will remember in the play of "Doctor Paulding" that the doctor proves his point of the nature of man's soul by his belief in three people, a belief so strong that their evil intentions—intentions induced in great part by their necessity—cannot be carried out in the face of his love for them. It was but S. Sydney Tappan's first assault upon that idea that there is a new monster with each generation. In "Doctor Paulding" the age-old monster took Sammy's characters in hand and the love of the doctor saved them.

Afterward, Sammy could never understand how he searched so long for his idea when it lay about him all the while in that poorly furnished room. It was his genius, of course, that held the audience breathless in the working out of the idea. People after seeing "Doctor Paulding" were often at a loss to account for the strength of the interest. It was because, beneath the texture of the play, there beat the eternal truth. To this day, however, I fear there are some managers who never understood it.

I have always wondered, too, if some time during those months in which he wrote "Doctor Paulding," a certain old-fashioned drawing-room in Melchester, with an eager-faced girl sitting before him, never came into his mind; or if his own remark of years ago "that some one should write a play about it!" did not ever occur to him. The roots of our ideas and actions extend down and back so far in the soil of our subconscious minds that it is difficult sometimes to trace the exact seed from which some of our inspirations spring. Perhaps, after all, the flowering of his soul under the sunshine of the divine inspiration was only the final development of that seed planted in his mind so long ago by Carrie; planted, and unconsciously nurtured by her during those years afterward. I am certain, at least, that our Sammy would not be sitting just now, writing "Doctor Paulding" in his cheap room, had it not

been for Carrie. He might have arrived at the same goal by other and devious routes long after, but we can give Carrie all the credit, this time, for the great idea which stirs him so. The miracle of his awakening has been succeeded by this task, ready made apparently for him to grapple with. He is beginning his attack upon the nation's monster, poverty! And beginning it at the beginning: the moral anarchy of the human minds that cause it.

A rather large contract! I can hear you saying, with a smile. Well, remember that the larger the conception, the greater always was S. Sydney Tappan's enthusiasm. For the time being he has conceived of himself as but one step down that Vista of the Future; and behind him he can still see the glory of all the others, as they hold high their torches down the many different aisles. At least he will blaze the way another foot!

It was one evening some two months after his inspiration that our Sammy was tempted again, in his odd way, by that old conception he had held of success. A note from Dorothy, asking him to take her for dinner at the Ritz and to the theatre afterward, was the guise in which the temptation came.

Poor Dorothy! Money was always the last thing in the world about which she ever took thought. Sammy is one of her oldest friends, a friend of Hawthorne Street, and can surely spare the time to spend an evening with her—this has been the way she has put it to herself as she writes the note. He is rather worth keeping track of, too, nowadays, since his great triumph in Melchester. He will make an interesting addition to society whenever he comes to town; and, for some reason, he is no longer upon Carrie's string. Perhaps because Carrie has turned out to be so odd. He has made a tremendous amount of money, too, by this time, most likely. People who write plays which get on always do.

She has not followed the season in New York this year, and so does not know of S. Sydney Tappan's

brief, meteoric career and sudden vanishment. To Melchester he will always be a tremendous success, from now henceforth.

The weaknesses of the man! Our Sammy has his vision now, and yet there still hangs about him the ghost of that old mania of success. Despite our visions, environment can always offer us a battle still. He does not care so far as New York is concerned, but he cannot bear that Melchester shall ever know of the change in his circumstances. It was partly pure pride, too, of course; that same pride which did our Sammy for character so long, and which still stands about waiting for a chance to serve again. I do not know which of the two was the impelling motive that urged him on to entertain Dorothy. I can add no commentary, however, which would illuminate more plainly the odd mixture of this S. Sydney Tappan than the mere fact that he drew out twenty-five of his few remaining dollars to take her to the Ritz! Thank Heaven, dress clothes for men stay in style for comparatively long periods.

His spirits rose, too, oddly enough, as he trod Fifth Avenue once more, on his way to the hotel. He forgot his circumstances completely in those few minutes during which he walked up Fifth Avenue and looked at the buildings with a new interest. He was thinking of the wide application of his new play, now well under way. In fact, he was just refusing the great Kane the opportunity of producing it as he walked into the lobby!

While he waits in the lobby, however, his old perplexities come back to plague him. He has not written to Carrie yet! And it is nearly three months since he received her note thanking him for the Martha Grossman check. As he waits for Dorothy to come downstairs he realizes afresh that he does not know even yet what to say in answer to that letter of congratulation; and this dinner will be talked of in Melchester, will come to Carrie's ears in time, perhaps before he has screwed up courage to write. To all intents and purposes he must say to-night what he

will say later about the "Lady in the Lion Skin" and its withdrawal—unless the subject can be avoided. It will have to be the truth, of course, he decides a moment later. To realize upon the instant the unfairness of the thing to him! The old truth is no longer the truth about him. The Sammy who sits in the Ritz Carlton to-night could never have written any "Lady in the Lion Skin."

What will Sylvia say, he wonders? In a way he dreads seeing Sylvia again—she will not understand his new point of view, he fears. He has not said anything to her in his letters beyond the fact that he is writing a new play. She is coming to New York to-night, too, for a week-end stay, and he will be seeing her soon.

And he rises to greet Dorothy and they go in to dinner.

To Dorothy it is quite an exciting occasion. She does not take dinner every night at the Ritz with successful playwrights. No doubt the diners are all wondering if she is his fiancée!

"Do tell me," she says vivaciously, as some of our Sammy's precious twenty-five dollars disappear with the first course. "Do tell me about the play!"

"The play?" our Sammy repeats, a little blankly. It does not seem reasonable that she can mean "Doctor Paulding," so soon!

"Yes," she goes on, "your Lion Lady——"

"You mean the 'Lady in the Lion Skin,'" says S. Sydney Tappan hastily. He can stand anything except wrong titles on his plays!

"So I do," says Dorothy, "of course!"

"Withdrawn," says Sammy laconically.

She stares at him blankly.

"You don't mean it!" she cries. "But why? I thought it was such a success!"

"It was," says Sammy drily. Good heavens, is this to be his punishment, this bringing up of that miserable play every time he meets people he has not

seen for some time? To certain old ladies in Melchester, he knows, he is still a plumber, probably to remain one until plumbing goes out of style. He had not thought the "Lady in the Lion Skin" would dog his footsteps in the same manner.

"The depression," he explains, although he loathes to. He always hated to explain anything, and this is particularly unpleasant, coming so soon after his hope that the subject might not be touched on.

Dorothy attempts to look knowing. Depression? Where has she heard of this before? But she is saved the bother of thinking by a diversion.

Sammy has risen from his chair to greet a woman, girl she seems almost, with fine bronze hair and ivory complexion, who is running with little steps across the dining-room to seize him by both hands and hug him.

"Sylvia!" he says, in his voice the ring of unmistakable pleasure. It is partly because he is really glad to see her, partly because he will not have to explain now just why he has no new play upon Broadway, nor that he is writing a new one of a different hue, meant to overshadow all the others. Dorothy will be side tracked.

"Tappy," Sylvia cries out. "I'm just in from Boston—I've finished there—I couldn't get you on the telephone just now!"

With a little grin, S. Sydney Tappan introduces Dorothy.

"We were just talking about you," he says to Sylvia, who has sat down now, leaving her two partners quite nonplussed at the table over by the windows.

"Yes," says Dorothy, "and the 'Lady in the Lion Skin!'"

This is the most thrilling thing that has ever happened to her. She is actually dining in the Ritz with a playwright and Sylvia Tremaine. Melchester can offer nothing like this!

"Poor Tappy," says Sylvia, patting him upon the arm. "Wasn't it too mean?" she turns to Dorothy.

"And after I got him to write it, too! You don't know how much I've missed you, Sydney—— How are all your troubles? Oh! And the new play! You must bring it to-morrow!"

Sammy shakes his head.

"No," he says in an odd tone.

Dorothy gasps a little. Why, he treats her quite rudely, nonchalantly—and she is so evidently in love with him!

"You will!" says Sylvia imperiously. She changes to her wheedling tone once more: "Please don't be a pig, Tappy." She turns again to Dorothy. "He's very piggy at times."

"No," reiterates Sammy, defending himself. "It isn't done."

"Of course it isn't—not in nice society!" Sylvia says in a flash.

Sammy stares at her soberly.

"You've degenerated, Syllly," he says. "You knew I meant the play. I shall not read from unfinished masterpieces!"

"You will," she says. "You've got to come."

She considers him a moment.

"I'm going to whisper to him, now, and ruin him," she says to Dorothy. "They're victims when I whisper."

"I don't hear you," says Sammy. "Besides, I shall call the head waiter. I won't be persecuted in a public place."

But Sylvia leans over and whispers in his ear.

"Come to-night," she whispers. "I'll be back, too, at twelve-thirty."

And with a little nod to Dorothy she hurries away to her two waiting partners before our Sammy can make his negative take effect.

"She is darling," cries Dorothy. "Isn't she?"

"She's the devil," replies S. Sydney Tappan, ruefully. He will have to go, he knows. He would rather put it off, too. She will require a great deal of explaining from him before she lets him off. Still, she

is a brick after all. She is the same as if he had fifty plays upon Broadway at the moment. There is a little catch in his throat as he looks after her. There is something fine about Sylvia Tremaine, after all. In his heart he knows that she has made just a tiny extra fuss about him because just at the moment he is not a fine success! It is her way of comforting him, though all the Ritz is looking on!

Dorothy brings him back with a little jolt.

"Do tell me, Sammy—is she in love with you?"

Sammy flushes a little.

"Ridiculous," he says rudely. Inside he is conscious that she does like him perhaps a trifle more than friendship calls for. "Tell me, what is the news from Melchester? Is it the same?"

Dorothy denies indignantly the implication that nothing much ever occurs in the old city of their youth.

"All sorts of changes," she says. "Deaths, and marriages, and engagements!"

"Any one I know?" he asks.

"Old Mr. Dabney," she says tentatively.

"Old Mr. Dabney!" he exclaims. There is a little pain in his heart. He has never written the old man yet! And now it is too late. Old Mr. Dabney—why the old gentleman knew his grandfather, his mother—the law office overlooking the corners comes before his eyes for a brief second.

"I am sorry to hear that," he adds quietly. Dorothy has been naming others meanwhile but he has not heard her. He has been standing in old-fashioned Melchester, a little boy once more, waiting by the horse-car for old Mr. Dabney to give him a quarter to celebrate his seventh birthday. He has never forgotten that thrill. Perhaps the deed is being read aloud in Heaven, at that moment, and it has silenced Sammy. Old Mr. Dabney, with his old-fashioned ideas! Was he ever young? Well, he has vanished now, along with the horse-cars—forever.

Dorothy is watching S. Sydney Tappan rather

closely, however. She has always wondered just what this boy—good heavens, he is a man, now!—what his feelings toward Carrie are. She has heard rumours of a certain young doctor in the Settlement. Is it all off between her and Sam Tappan, or was there never anything except old friendship between them? He is a good catch, now, S. Sydney Tappan; not so good, perhaps, as Asa Dobbs, but there is a younger generation coming along in Melchester these days that threatens her hold on him. It frightens her a little at times, this coming generation of young girls. They are dangerous, as she herself approaches the thirty mark. She has always liked Sammy, too. He can be somebody in Melchester society with the proper wife.

"They say Carrie is engaged," she says keenly, "as perhaps you know—though it isn't announced, so congrats aren't in order." She watches for the effect. "You were sweet on her once, weren't you, Sam?"

"In my youth," answers Sammy easily. "Who is the man?"

His self-control astonishes him. Of course he has thought of this before—has imagined things from her letters; but the reality, somehow, seems to have plunged a cold, cruel knife into his heart, killing all feeling at first. Slowly, the knife withdraws. Carrie! Carrie belonging to some one else! A tiny cloud of red throws itself athwart his brain, and on it his memory paints the golf course beside the river, the lights of the club, and in the shadows a starry-eyed young nymph of love, her trembling arms and shy smile speaking of dawning passion. It is with a great effort that S. Sydney Tappan retains his calm seat in the Ritz dining-room beside the glowing candlebulbs. Before Heaven, there is but one Carrie!

"One of those doctors in the Settlements, they say," says Dorothy quite frankly. She has not noticed the slightest thing that would betoken any emotion in the man before her. It must be Sylvia Tremaine with whom she must fight for Sammy.

Why, he has not even asked for the doctor's name, she thinks, a little relievedly, in the theatre afterward; though she has but told the gossip about Carrie, and could give the man's name, if it were required. S. Sydney Tappan cannot be very much interested there any longer, if he does not even wish to know that! She parts from him with a long, warm handclasp that can mean everything or nothing, just as he may choose to think. She will follow this up. Old friendship is a handy cloak.

In Sammy's mind, however, as he hurries along down to Sylvia's apartment with but three dollars left from the fund taken for the evening's entertainment, there is nothing but the stunning news about Carrie. That Dorothy is left with the impression of his intimacy with Sylvia, and of a play withdrawn because of a depression, but soon to be followed by another for Miss Tremaine, he has not the least conception. He has not explained, and the conclusion is unescapable. To him there is but the one vital fact: the piercing dread of some of those old letters of Carrie's has become a grim reality; he has lost her for good and all. He does not care to see Dorothy again.

He knows now, however, what Carrie meant in that first letter of hers. A vision! Well, he has a vision, too, now. Thank God for that! There is nothing that can upset his grim determination to follow out to the bitter end this path he is treading. He has a purpose in the world, an ideal; and will attain it despite everything. There have been others. A world of pharisees! The phrase recurs to him. Will that music ever cease resounding in his soul?

In her apartment Sylvia surveys him with a little stab of pain at the look still in his eyes. He has not forgotten that old trouble of his yet, she thinks. What would she not give to stir him like this? It is his trouble, nevertheless, and she wishes passionately to help him no matter at what cost.

"I wouldn't care," she is saying hotly. "I would

go back to-morrow, and see her! I wouldn't let any one take her from me if I loved her and wanted her!"

But S. Sydney Tappan has spread out his hands.

"Just seventy-eight dollars, Sylvia," he says in grim jest. "See my hoard!"

Sylvia starts back in amazement.

"You are joking, Sydney," she says. "It can't be."

"It is," says Sammy grimly.

"Not while I have money," she says impetuously.

"All I have is yours, Tappy—don't think of that for a minute—money! Good God, what is money just now?"

He smiles.

"Perhaps she doesn't want me any longer, Sylvia," he says painfully.

"She's a fool if she doesn't," Sylvia retorts. "Anyway, Tappy, you must go and see——"

He shakes his head.

"No prospects, now," he says oddly.

"What do you mean?" cries Sylvia. "What is back of it all in your mind? You aren't worrying about supporting her, are you? With your ability? You can sell all you can write, I know it! I can place it. This depression can't last forever!"

"You don't understand, Sylvia," he says at last. He has a strange, new doubt of his own worthiness added to the growing conviction that his fight with poverty has only begun in all its phases. "It is all different, there—different from your standards, your ideas—I can't ask her, anyway to——" He falls silent.

She flushes.

"I am cheap, I know," she says strangely. She realizes for perhaps the first time the gulf their past has placed between them.

Sammy is touched.

"You're all gold, Sylvia," he says huskily. He stoops a moment, and kisses her hand. "I know that."

In Sylvia's soul, however, there is a queer despair. She feels helpless, as though she were struggling with some weird enemy whom she cannot see, and so does not

know how to fight. This trouble of Sydney's is mental, with roots far down in soil she has never seen. If only it could be solved by action, by emotion, by beauty! With a little sob she realizes her limitations; the limitations of her brains. Her charm—of what avail all this passionate charm of hers to-night, when it does not win this man for her, or help him in the hour of his trouble? She is lifting to-night, almost for the first time, the cross she will hereafter bear.

"Oh, I've changed," Sammy bursts out. "That's all—Sylvia. It's what she wanted—I can't write that—that stuff any longer. I've changed—somehow!"

"But can't you write it a little longer—to get her?" cries Sylvia in astonishment.

"Good God, that's it!" says Sammy, striding up and down before the fire. "The damnable part of it—I can't have her if I continue to write it. She doesn't want me, can't have me. And if I don't, I can't have her myself—don't you see? It's one of those vicious circles!"

He knows too well his financial chances with a play like "Doctor Paulding," to blind himself to what he is doing. He must contain himself in patience if he is to tread this path he has entered; a patience which he has no right to require Carrie to share on West Twenty-ninth Street, if she can love another in happiness. Poverty is not overburdened with self-assurance.

"Write me a play," she says, an odd look in her face. "I'll break with Friedman and produce it!" She is offering her oldest friendship upon the altar of his necessity did he but know it. She does not exactly understand his difficulty, but she does know that her name will carry almost any play to a financial success.

He shakes his head.

"I can't write one for you, any——" he starts; and stops, aghast at the thing he was about to say.

A light flashes upon her.

"Because I am cheap," she says in a strange, low

tone. "Cheap and vulgar, and degrading, Tappy—I don't elevate at all! Is that it?"

"No, no!" he cries, strangely shaken.

"It is," she says imperiously. "I know it! Don't you suppose I know what they say about me?"

"It isn't that!" cries Sammy. "It is that I've got something fine this time, Sylvia—something I can't sacrifice."

She turns on him quickly.

"A message?" she demands. And, as he nods, she throws up her arms in dismay. "Good-night! Tappy! *In pace requiescat*, S. Sydney Tappan. What is it?"

"Poverty," he says, stung. "The poverty that is all about us——"

"Poverty!" she groans. "They don't want poverty in the theatre. Rot and insanity, Sydney. It's entertainment they want!"

"Well, by God, I've got it!" he says, flashing fire at last.

They could say anything they wished to S. Sydney Tappan, so long as they left his dramatic gift alone. Criticism of that made of him a raging tiger. "I've got a play, a real play! A play they can't escape from. A play that will sweep the country, and their souls! I know it—I'm no fool about things like that. I have a thousand Ladies in Lion Skins in a half-hour of this—I would stake my life on it!"

This is a new Sammy to Sylvia Tremaine, but she is touched to the quick now.

"Too good for Sylvia Tremaine, I suppose?" she says, like a rapier.

"Not for the real Sylvia," he cries significantly.

She looks at him for a moment. Then a little, bitter laugh comes to her lips.

"Which is the real?" she cries. There is a wild, new conflict in her soul, a strange, fierce antagonism. "Which is the real, Sydney—talking to you here, or out on the stage, your heroine of passion? Don't talk to me of the real Sylvia! Perhaps I want you, and won't stop

at anything to get you, keep you, sell myself to you for the price of a play; perhaps that is the real me—not what you see here in the apartment——”

She stares at him hotly, her breath coming fast and thick. Her brain is a little bit in a whirl. Then she flings her hands back of her head and laughs.

“Perhaps I’ve fallen in love with you because you haven’t ever made love to me,” she says. “Who knows? Who knows, I’m a contrary thing. What is the real Sylvia?”

Her expression changes, and she looks at him a little wistfully.

“Feel a tiny bit sorry for me, Tappy, anyway. I’m too old to change much, any more. I couldn’t live without the stage I have been used to. It is life to me. You would hate me in a little while if I should try to change—there is nothing left except when I am acting. There is no real Sylvia any more.”

She rises and makes a little face.

“You’re right, Tappy—you should have said it all. Tell me about the first two acts, even if I can’t ever play it.”

He looks at her, a new feeling tugging at his heart. I wonder is it pity? She had looked just a trifle old for a fleeting second.

“You could do it, Sylvia,” he says hoarsely. “Before Heaven, you could!”

“Do what?” she asks bluntly.

“The play——” he begins.

But she cuts him short.

“Forget it, Tappy,” she says grimly. “You can’t teach an old dog new tricks. They’d be looking for the wrong thing all the while. Sylvia Tremaine’s mark is made too plainly now, I think, Tappy. Let’s eat!”

It is not until the door at West Twenty-ninth Street closes behind him that S. Sydney Tappan sees plainly the figure of Sylvia standing staring after him, as he blazes his way onward down the Future, her hand upon her heart, and on her lips an odd little smile of pain. She

will never have a vision, although she wants it so badly. She has gone so far down her path that she can never turn back now. Her next play was "A Modern Cleopatra," if my memory is right.

If only Sammy had loved her, she might have changed after all. I do not think, however, that he was ever sure just how much she really meant of what she said. Perhaps, though, that was merely his way of declining to see that he had refused her.

Poor Sylvia! I am afraid he did not think of her once again that night after the door had closed behind him at two o'clock on West Twenty-ninth Street. He was thinking, with a little ache around his heart, of Carrie.

CHAPTER XVI

IN WHICH MR. SCHROEDER AND JOHN ROUSE CONSPIRE
TOGETHER, ALTHOUGH NEITHER OF THEM
KNOWS IT, AND CARRIE LEAVES MEL-
CHESTER, AS A RESULT

THERE was little opportunity allowed Carrie for thinking about herself that winter in Melchester. It was the first time that any doubt of the ultimate success of her work ever presented itself to her, also. But the tasks of each day pressed hard and fast upon the occupants of the house on Hague Street as the biting cold of the northern winter set in, and the snow and ice festooned the dark, draughty houses of the poor, and the milk upon the crooked window sills of the tenements of Melchester froze and thrust out its icy head to meet the blast from Canada and Lake Erie. Gone now, in great measure, the ever-threatening menace of outside disease, and come the endless misery of bleak, raw mornings, and cold, nipping, gelid, wintry nights, when the frosty gale swept through the creaking dwellings, and the warmth of God Himself seemed to have departed from the shivering inmates.

The little playground in the rear of the Settlement house is dark and icy, the small, thin trees seeming to moan a little, in the snowy dusk of February afternoons, for the voices of the summer; voices only heard from afar off, now and then, when the wind brings the sound of children crying from the shut-in, stuffy rooms of the comfortless, squalid tenements; hiding-places, now, for the youth of Hague Street, until the mean, sleety streets are transformed into playgrounds once more by the sun of summer. Melchester has its tene-

ments nowadays, you see—it has progressed from the little city of thirty years ago.

The snow lies white and clean, however, except where the traffic has soiled the pavements and walks. There are few factories running this year of the depression, and no soot from the chimneys of industry floats over the snow of Hague Street. The snow is deep this winter, also, so deep that there have been complaints from the limousine owners of Washington Avenue upon the condition of the streets for motor driving. The great elms are beautiful, their graceful branches filled with the tracery of the Winter God. In the country, where the ice in the creeks glitters in the sun, the fields rest quietly beneath their covering of white, and the forests sway gently, clothed in magic, flashing brilliant gems upon their moving branches, with here and there the solid green of hemlocks and firs holding out always the memory of summer. Summer will come again!

Summer will not come again, however, for many of the people Carrie is looking after this bleak winter. She has had to fight hard against the prejudice which she has found attaches to charity among the poor. Some of these people will die for lack of proper attendance rather than call on charity for assistance. Gradually, however, the wall of bias has crumbled before the untiring efforts of the nurses, and that part of her task is over. She is one of them, despite her origin, and they no longer resent her in the cold, dirty tenements where haggard women lift hot boilers of wash, and starving infants cough upon the floor. How often she has wished that her father might spend just one night in these tenements on Hague Street; might look in the frosty windows a while from the barren fire-escapes—places deserted now, since the molten heat of summer is gone, and icy winter makes them choice sleeping quarters no longer.

She is certain, now, that Settlements can never make over America—and yet, slowly but surely, they are getting hold of the children! The children of the tene-

ments, the poor of to-morrow. Surely this is something. Too, she can feel that up through the mass of society there is permeating gradually the consciousness of social justice, blind, unthinking as yet, sometimes a mere impulse without real knowledge, but vital, real, flaming nevertheless. That half-glimpsed vision of Sammy's, the night they walked home before the play, recurs to her these days with ever-increasing force. Can these Settlements hold the balance from destruction while slow, sodden society moves painfully, infinitesimally toward the goal? Life is to-day to the down-trodden, foreign miner of the Hocking Valley as much as in the elm-shadowed mansions of Washington Avenue. Will the vast class they of the Hocking Valley symbolize wait, she wonders? Or is the adjustment of society so slow that to them no movement is visible, and do they think the wait will be forever unless they move themselves?

Over in O'Halloran's saloon there is a symptom of unrest which does not augur well for that patient wait in Melchester this winter. In the warmth and comfort there, O'Halloran is keeping an eye upon John Rouse where he sits drinking moodily, sparingly, around him a group of silent, half-angry, sullen workmen. That strike indorsed by the Federation of Labour has spread now, until half the city's trades are involved, beside the ill-advised new union of the clerks, and O'Halloran wants no disturbance in his place. This Rouse is an Industrial Worker of the World, and may be throwing dynamite before the evening is over. O'Halloran knows these I. W. W.'s for what they are. They will bear watching if what the *Democrat Herald* has always said is the truth.

"Damn your socialists, your milk and water political socialists!" Rouse is saying, harshly, his eyes flashing, his red bushy hair standing out from his head like that of some animal.

O'Halloran can hardly believe his ears. Aren't socialists and all this crew alike, he wonders blankly?

He leans over the bar to hear what more the firebrand may have to say.

"Hell is here right now, boys—and who in hell wants to vote?" Rouse goes on morosely. There is a suggestion of a smouldering volcano about him. "Suckers! That's what you are, suckers! Every one of you. What's your fine Federation of Labour going to do for you, I'd like to know? Treat you like the Brotherhood of Engineers did! Use you to climb out of the dirt with, and then throw you over! Look at them—too proud to help in any strike now because they've got what they want! I've been a Knight of Labour—you can't tell me anything. What's the use of it all? Vote! Vote, they tell you! What's the good of that, when every one of 'em is a capitalist ticket? Get you the eight-hour day, eh? Well, what's the good of an eight-hour day—if they can throw you out of work whenever they want to? Answer me that?"

He takes a long drink of his beer. These men around him do not all agree with him, but they are silent. Rouse knows what he thinks, and they do not; and so he dominates.

"And your patriotism—and your army!" he laughs, sneeringly, while the men at the tables shift uncomfortably. There is in them still an indefinable feeling for this country in which they get their living—a feeling that rouses a little at these words of his. They are not desperate enough yet to have lost their inherited tradition. It is only in the men of foreign birth that the sneer meets with real approval. They have experienced the power of the military in Odessa, in Berlin, perhaps in Birmingham.

Rouse is not daunted. He can see only the ignorance of these men before him—of their personal situation in the world.

"The militia—the regulars! Go and fight for what? Capitalist property? The right to lose my job? Think, in God's name, boys! Join the National Guard or the Army and go shoot down your brother workmen? Is

that what you want to do? Fight for the capitalist, as well as work for him? Both for wages? Wages! Who wants just wages? Fools who don't know any better! That's what all these employers think we are—fools! And, by God, we are!"

There is a murmur of approval at this. Rouse looks around him, his smouldering eyes lighting a little.

"One big union, that's what we want! The I. W. W. and direct action! Altogether—one test; do you work for wages? If you do, by God, you're with us! To hell with their law, and churches—all capitalist! We'll stick together, too—direct action!"

It is the counsel of despair that this busy-headed revolutionist is preaching to these disgruntled strikers to-night. He calls himself I. W. W. or syndicalist, and it is the red flag of destruction, of revolution that he is calling for to accomplish his ends. Only one man, too, this John Rouse; one of thousands sprinkled across the continent from the leaden-coloured hills of Butte to the narrow streets of Fall River, Mass.; from the rocky hills of the copper country beside the cold blue of Lake Superior to the flaring mills of West Virginia as they stretch along the Ohio River, lighting up the turbid stream at night with their flames of steel—thousands, preaching this same doctrine of destruction, of revolution—undermining the staid labour unions, revolutionary once themselves, sapping the roots of the socialists' broad ideas of universal opportunity and socialized industries, catching the flotsam and jetsam of the industrial stream, the failures, the wrecks, the unsuccessful, the bankrupt, the hungry, the poor, the red-hot visionaries, the fanatics, the dreamers, carrying them all along to destruction upon the platform of class consciousness, class victory, selfishness personified; ignoring all classes other than their own, declaring war upon that vast public beyond all classification who struggle vainly to make a living between the grindstones of the industrial strife.

Destruction, riot, bloodshed!

Will the rest of the world see it all plainly enough, or will they refuse, while the balance swings more and more until the world goes crashing down again, and they are left gaping among the ruins? Ignorance is weighing on the scales in O'Halloran's saloon to-night.

A lanky, black-haired man with a face something like a turtle's is answering John Rouse.

"That's all right, John Rouse," he is saying, "but how about now? To-night? I've got a wife, and children, and I've got to earn food for them. You tell me how to feed them to-night, and I'm with your one Big Union."

Another murmur of approval goes up from the men. These plans never seem to have much to do with the present as they know it. Men with families cannot afford to join a desperate cause unless forced to it.

Rouse's eyes contract.

"Is your strikers' committee feeding them?" he asks scornfully. "No, by God! They got you to strike and now they leave you in the lurch! That's all the good organized labour is to you. Get you out, and then tell you to slink back like a lot of whipped curs, and beg back your old jobs. Do you want me to tell you to-night to strike for the one Big Union like that? I want your confidence. Can I get it by thinking first of trouble, or of success? Why, success of course! Prepare first, and then, when ready, strike! What was Buchanan's double rule? Is it just? And can it succeed? Of course it's just. But can it succeed? No! Not yet. So wait! Prepare! And while you wait practise sabotage, obstruction, burn down their plants."

"It's revolution!" says a light-haired Welshman.

"You bet it is," cries Rouse. "Will anything else get it for you? No. Force! That's us! That's our only chance!"

The depression has forced the hand of these strikers in Melchester this winter. The central treasury cannot stand the drain to which appeals from all over the

country are subjecting it. Labour is in poor shape. And so the Melchester strike, called too soon in order to aid the hastily organized clerks' union, has been called off again. It has not been necessary to resort to paid detectives or strike breakers, with carefully planned dynamitings, to cast discredit on and finally break up the strikers. Hunger has taken charge of the campaign for capital; and several thousand more recruits have enlisted beneath the banner of revolution, with despair and injustice in their hearts, and in their minds the final conviction that there is no hope, no solution for them except in the I. W. W. and its red flag of destruction, despite its crowd of worthless hangers-on.

Well, who shall blame them, when the rest of the world looks coldly on? We know our friends in times of trouble and despair, and this I. W. W. is the only group in the world with one word of immediate hope or promise for the disinherited of the earth, their flag upon the streets of Melchester an accusing finger pointed directly at our strangely unresponsive social conscience. Inaction is sometimes as productive of results as vigorous deeds; it is usually the case, however, that the results are not so pleasing. It is but natural, therefore, that we should not give a rousing welcome to this newcomer in our midst, a newcomer who grows daily in the power of despair while we look comfortably on.

There are to be others besides strikers, however, who are to lose positions in Melchester this winter. The losing of this strike has made other people the winners; and in the back office of Hopkinson, Balmer & Lawrence there is sitting a middle-aged man with a hard look around his mouth.

"Not one cent!" Mr. Schroeder is saying harshly to the little group of mild-faced ladies and uncomfortable clergymen who make up the majority of the directing committee of the Hague Settlement Association. "My ideas on the usefulness of such institutions have changed!"

His ideas!

It is Carrie who breaks the silence.

"Because we have extended aid impartially, father?" she asks. She always went to the root of a thing.

"Certainly not!" her father replies angrily. "Because it isn't an aid—it simply stirs up trouble, aids no one, helps only these agitators in their efforts at dissension. I have no objection to the charitable aims of the organization."

He is referring to the course the settlement has taken in aiding the strikers' families during this trouble—yes, and in guiding some of them in their acts. They have taught some of them to think and act for themselves, in fact have taught them a great many things that have made them better able to continue the fight.

The little group is rendered more uncomfortable, however, by the strangeness of the situation. It is this man's daughter, who sits beside Mrs. Lewis, on whom a great portion of the responsibility for the affair rests. What shall they say or do? To them Mr. Schroeder is one of the leading citizens of Melchester, with power to make many gifts to charity; a man of brains and character, a tremendous success.

In Carrie's mind, however, as she looks at him, there is the memory of twenty years of muddled thinking, his life devoted to the one thing of making money. How can he be expected to view anything outside his business with clearness and fairmindedness? The idol has feet of clay. Making money does not fit for anything except keeping it. A bigot in a position of false value is what she would say of the man who sits in the mahogany chair, were he any one except her father. Into her mind flashes the picture of John Rouse talking to disgruntled strikers in the streets of Melchester. Somehow, he bears a strange resemblance in his point of view to the man who sits here in Hopkinson, Balmer & Lawrence. It is in his stubbornness, she decides, the intenseness of his hate for people who do not agree with him. Neither of them can

yield an inch, neither ever grant the other the smallest concession, neither concede anything of justice each to the other. Dimly she realizes that if both these two industrial extremes insist upon their way the world will crash in pieces at the contact. Somewhere there must be a compromise. Her father in his office is but adding to that weight of ignorance and despair which is becoming so heavy upon the scales, adding by his iron refusal to even consider that there can be another side to this dispute than his own. This is why he can condemn the Settlement for keeping that open mind so necessary, if the balance is to be preserved.

It is when the committee have gone, the Schroeder ultimatum of charity but no uplift in their ears, that Carrie realizes the strength of her father's ideas. He is the weak man of one idea, and holding it with the strength of ten. It is revenge, I think, with Mr. Schroeder partly, a desire to show this daughter with her impractical ideas that he is right after all, despite those ignominious morning conversations. Her sureness has irritated him ever since he can remember; a sureness seemingly only increased by the addition of a few years of knowledge. He will show her, now! Well, you always were a trifle too sure, Carrie; but you have lost a little of it, I think, in those tenements on Hague Street, whether your father can see it or not. Ideas are curious things and Mr. Schroeder is not buying or selling groceries to-day.

"What do you really want, father?" she asks quietly, at last. "Do you want to destroy the Settlement for the work it is doing, or do you want me to resign?" She has a shrewd idea that a good part of his opposition comes from her participation in the work.

He looks at her in an odd way. He has never understood this daughter of his, and yet he has always had for her a certain respect, a certain admiration which he has never granted the others.

"You can do what you like," he says. There is a

trace of irritation in his tone, which he tries hard to conceal. "You are usually quite certain of your course. I can only say what I said before. So long as you care to pursue this course of which we do not approve we can hardly be blamed for withholding our support—and any others we can influence. The thing is pernicious, a menace. You are merely a girl, and do not understand."

"I see," she says steadily. "We must hold your ideas if we are to receive your money?"

"Certainly," he replies. He looks out the window a moment before going on. "Of course, I am not saying anything about my personal feelings in the matter. It isn't necessary to state that treachery in the family isn't the most pleasant thing to contemplate."

This is a deliberate attempt to place his daughter in the wrong. She feels it immediately, and gazes at him unwaveringly.

"It isn't treachery to think for ones' self," she says. "That is one reason I left No. 1200 Washington, so that I shouldn't be either a traitor or a hypocrite. I have always told you what I thought. Your money shouldn't be allowed to make us all hypocrites. We will do without it."

There is little of the old relation left between these two any longer. Years of intellectual differences have had their inevitable effect.

Mr. Schroeder straightens up in his chair.

"You don't know what you are doing, Carolyn," he says. "You won't get any support financially if you don't get ours. Capital is standing together these days. I shouldn't warn you if you weren't my daughter."

It is an open threat, a plain statement of the case. Into Carrie's mind comes the realization that this Settlement for which she works, and which she wishes so intensely to succeed in the task it has but begun, is in reality absolutely dependent upon her father and the men he can control for its continued existence. For a little instant she sees why the poor despise charity.

What a tremendous force, too, this is which her father is bringing to bear upon her in his threat of withdrawal of support! If she wishes her ideas to prevail she must see the people in her tenements deprived of even the little godsend the Settlement aid has been. I do not think that from that moment there was in her mind a second's doubt as to what her course should be. She saw too plainly the babies, the dun childhood of Hague Street to ever hesitate for herself. In that moment there came to her, also, a great sympathy for the men and women of the world, the clergymen, the social workers—placed in this same position of hers. And I think, too, the remnants of her love for her father passed silently from her heart, never to return.

"The fight has moved, hasn't it?" she says oddly, gazing at him. "From tenement work to industry!"

She will not give him the satisfaction of knowing the feeling of loneliness this final gulf between them has left in her girlish heart. It has not been thus that she has conceived of father and daughter.

"There's always a fool reformer looking around for trouble, everywhere," her father says scornfully. He has gotten this from the columns of the *Democrat Herald*. A great comfort to him, that paper!

"I suppose the trouble all lies at the root," Carrie says, half to herself. "Charity is just really a gilded restoration! Isn't it?"

This is above his head. How can even the painters' union gild a restoration?

"Charity is a very creditable thing," he says.

His daughter does not seem to hear him.

"A gilded restoration," she is saying. "And its symbol John Rouse's mother, on a field of competitive blood, surmounted by the motto 'Profit.'"

She stands up and holds out her hand.

"Good-bye, father," she says strangely. "If it makes any difference in your support, I am going to resign."

And she nods to him quite brightly, and goes out.

In Mr. Schroeder's mind there is only the one thought

as he looks after her—she has not mentioned his generosity at all. Well, at least she will have to see now that she cannot struggle against his ideas. She has been quite crazy on this subject of poverty. This, however, will bring her to her senses. She has seen that she must give up her ideas if the Settlement is to go on. The strike, too, is settled satisfactorily. Perhaps things are straightening themselves out after all. Possibly Carrie will return home now and take up her position in society as she should. That she will never do so again does not occur to him. A man of extremely short vision, our Mr. Schroeder. He can never conceive of any one doing anything which will not directly redound to that person's material benefit. I fear he gives to charity only because it is looked upon with distinct approval by society. Society has been engaged in it for some time. That always settled everything with Mr. Schroeder.

I almost hate to look into our Carrie's mind, two weeks later, as she removes her scanty luggage from the little bedroom in the house on Hague Street. It is because, through her misty eyes, I can see that tiny thought in the back of her mind: she is giving thanks for Sammy. He has never written her but the play has stayed withdrawn. Humanity cannot all be like her father; there must be other Sammys.

There does not seem to be any thought in her mind to-day, however, of that rumoured engagement to the young doctor. I wonder what has become of it? We would not wonder long could we look into Mrs. Schroeder's upstairs room and see the look of sadness upon her face. She is realizing now for the first time that Carrie is the only one of her family for whom she really cares. Is it, I wonder, because this middle-aged lady feels that of them all this recalcitrant daughter is the only one who cares for her, too? The sadness is because she knows now that they have lost Carrie finally and irrevocably. She is not returning to the house upon Washington Avenue except for dinner

before going to New York. That fair-haired doctor, whom Mrs. Schroeder hoped so much might capture her daughter's heart, has gotten Carrie a position in the Settlements of the East Side where the work is always at hand, endless, never done. His attentions have not resulted in an engagement, after all.

Mr. Schroeder has received the news without any comment whatever. He will be stubborn until the end. There was never any quarter in the struggle between the generations of the Schroeders. Perhaps they were all too sure!

The only difference noticeable to-day in this latest disagreement of the family is that Mrs. Schroeder has called no one fool. She has been looking back over the past since this clear-eyed daughter of hers was a child, marking the steps which have led so inexorably to the final parting. What fools they all have been, not to have realized before this that children still are human souls, with ideas and purposes and lives of their own to live. Her Carrie is going away to-day, perhaps forever, because they have not taken thought in time.

She is just her child, however, whom she does not expect to know again, as she sits, that evening, having dinner with the assembled family in the old-fashioned dining-room which has seen so many memorable scenes of the Schroeders. And yet Mrs. Schroeder is not so very keen, either, or she would notice that odd look in Carrie's eyes. It is very plain when no one is talking to her; and her heart comes in her eyes.

It is not all the pain of a parting, that look—a sudden pain the daughter of the house of Schroeder cannot control. Nor is it the picture of the childhood of Hague Street waving good-bye to her in the rain; nor, either, a jumbled glimpse of New York, and her strange future among people she has never seen. It is the queer stab of loneliness that has pierced her with a pain as poignant, as new, as if she had never felt its like before. She has learned from Dorothy of the new play for Sylvia, and the withdrawal of the "Lady in the Lion

Skin ' because of the depression. A depression, instead of a new Sammy! She has not been able to think of anything else since she first learned it. She remembers her letter with little shivers of humiliation. She sees now why he has never answered. What must he think of her? After all, he is a stranger, too, she sees. She is really alone.

It is why she steers the conversation at the table as far as possible from the things she is actually thinking. Indeed, conversation at the Schroeders' never had too much connection with the reality of their lives. It was more like a mental fog than anything, a fog behind which the combatants hugged their own thoughts to their bosoms, and defied the enemy to come on, and discover what they really thought.

So she eats her dinner in a strange little chatter of talk, directed mostly at her mother, and meaning nothing, swallowing down meanwhile that lump in her throat which threatens now and then to overcome her; and has said good-bye in the hall, and driven down to the station before the tears come to her eyes in the dark of the taxicab.

"And they say he is just crazy about his Sylvia Tremaine," Dorothy has said, she remembers, as she steps out at the new station.

Well, it is not entirely that, Carrie tells herself; it is principally that she has always counted upon him in spite of the trouble of the past months—and he has gone the way of the rest of the world now. Beneath it all, however, I think, there is a starved fire of affection for him that she does not dare to look at herself. Carrie's heart is slowly breaking for Sammy, although she will not admit it even to herself.

In the Schroeders' there has been a strange silence after she has gone. A silence broken by the sound of some one weeping in the kitchen. The soul of the Schroeders and Tappans together has gone away on the train—for Annie.

The family are quite silent.

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH FATE FIRST GIVES A HINT THAT SHE MAY HAVE ONE MORE HEROIC RÔLE FOR SAMMY

IT WAS the week after Sammy read the first two acts of "Doctor Paulding" to Sylvia that she spoke about the back royalties to Friedman.

He grunted in his usual way.

"It will all be fixed up this week, my dear girl," he said, after a moment's hesitation.

He did not usually allow any one to ask him questions about finance—it is a sore point in the theatrical world—but he had never attempted to conceal from Sylvia Tremaine the exact state of his affairs. He knew that he could count upon her unswerving loyalty, no matter what the outlook might be; and they had weathered many a worse storm than this one before.

In Sylvia there was an odd sort of loyalty to this ungainly fat man, who had starred her for so many years since he had discovered her playing a minor part in Chicago; a loyalty which would never allow her to even consider any changing of managers or contracts while he still stayed in the game. It would have destroyed a great part of her zest in life, I think, not to have had Friedman managing her. Besides, she could never have called any one else all the names she showered upon him. In her way she had a great fondness for the slow German.

Whether on this occasion he really intended to square his accounts with Sammy, and was prevented by unforeseen circumstances; or whether, in the back of his mind, the knowledge of Sylvia's impending departure for a road tour urged him to placate her with the assur-

ance of his good intentions, she never knew. It is odd to consider, now, that upon his remark hung the great sacrifice of our Sammy's life. Had the truth been known to Sylvia during those next months, I doubt exceedingly if any of their lives had been the same. Ignorance is always the great mischief maker of the world. In this case it allowed Fate to provide a stage for our Sammy's character so overwhelming in its dramatic appeal that he could no more resist playing the leading part thus offered him than he had been able to prevent his first proposal to Carrie, so many years before, beside the little hawthorne hedge in Melchester. The idea carried him away.

It is why I have never been able myself to give him all the honour his act really seems to deserve. If only he had had some other character than that queer one he had—he would have been a hero to me, too, then. As it is, I must confess to a great admiration for the grown-up boy who responded so gallantly to a cry of distress, and did not seem to count the cost. That was heroic, even though the actor was not a hero.

Long afterward, when Sylvia sometimes heaped herself with self-accusations, S. Sydney Tappan would console her with the assurance that he would not have accepted aid from her had she been there to proffer it. She always knew, however, that the solution which presented itself to our Sammy as the only way out would never have been allowed to carry him away had she been there.

He was working upon the third act of "Doctor Paulding" when she left for the road tour.

"Three months, Tappy," she is saying, a little ruefully, in the Grand Central Station, as he looks up at her on the platform of the observation car. "It's a frightfully long time, isn't it?"

Three months! In Sammy's mind there stretches the lengthened vista of the days of those three months, the sky overcast with the grim spectre of want. Three months! It will be spring, then. He seldom allows

his mind to dwell upon the future which lies beyond the next few days. There is nothing there but doubt, uncertainty, despair; things which do not add to his dramatic ability in the long, gray days, the late, cold evenings, the dark, gloomy mornings when he is working upon his play. How slowly it seems to take shape! It almost creeps upon the page, though in his mind it leaps ahead with great flashing bounds. How tiny appears each forward move when it has been translated to the manuscript, and the first glamour of the idea has faded, and it has been carved and fitted into its place in the dramatic structure—shorn of all its trappings and a mere stone in the pathway of the theme.

I wonder are you exclaiming to yourself, "a fool!" When his money is vanishing now, and he will be upon the streets soon unless something happens—and something seldom does? Well, our Sammy has not Ibsen's ability to earn much-needed meals with palette and brush when other things fail, as when the theatre in Christiania failed the great Norwegian—in fact, has no ability other than this gift he is so determined upon using. He has his great idea, now, and must write while the fit is upon him.

That he is a victim of an industrial depression does not occur to him as he sits days in his room, or tramps Central Park in the cold, icy mornings while his ideas fall into shape. He is simply extremely unlucky, just now! It all will pass in time. It perhaps was fortunate that the idea of securing employment of some kind to tide him over for the time being never did occur to him. He would have been wasting most precious time. In all New York, that winter, there was no work to be had.

His mind comes back, with a jump, to the girl who leans over the car railing looking anxiously at him while he is turning all this over in his mind.

"I only hope you draw well," he replies to her question.

She leans over and says in a low tone:

"Friedy is going to fix up the royalties, I asked him

about it yesterday. Don't blame him too much—he's been having the devil's own time of it these last months, Tappy!" And she smiles. "Drop me a line now you have the route, Sydney! Though I know you won't! Two postals and two letters were the sum total in Boston. You must do better than that this time."

She looks at him a trifle uncertainly for a moment, and then runs down the open steps, and says, a little wistfully:

"Kiss me good-bye, now, Tappy—I'm going in before the train starts. I can't bear partings, can you?"

I wonder is it some premonition that impels her to do this? A forewarning of that tiny gulf between them which will widen day by day until the separation of mere distance will seem of little moment beside the vast chasm between their souls? It is Sylvia whom the train is apparently bearing off, but it is our Sammy who is really going on.

"Good-bye, Sylvia," he says, with a little lump in his throat as he kisses her good-bye.

She is a brick, this girl with the charming smile and beautiful features—a brick, in spite of what she stands for on the stage. It is the little cleft in the rock, that thought!

He walks away hastily into the crowd, nevertheless, lest the little tears that fill his eyes run down his cheek. Tears! Just why, he wonders? He does not love Sylvia Tremaine. He is sorry to see her go, of course, but——

Well, Sammy, you do not know why you have those little tears as you wave your handkerchief at the outgoing train, but I could have told you. Tiny waves of pity are beginning to chase across your heart because you sense dimly the unhappiness that is slowly flooding Sylvia's soul. Your dramatic soul perceives unconsciously this first act of the tragedy of Sylvia—a tragedy that will play out its ever-lengthening scenes during the rest of her life whenever she thinks of you.

That fable of the royalties was soon exploded, however. It was about a week later that Friedman informed S. Sydney Tappan that he was going into bankruptcy. It was one of the most ironical moments of Sammy's life when he received, some two years later, a check from the United States Receiver for two hundred dollars. It was the shrunken dividend from the "Lady in the Lion Skin." Received two years before, it might have altered his whole existence. That he got nothing at all that winter, it is needless to remark; also, that Sylvia did not know he had not been paid before the crash. She learned it months later, in the worst half-hour Friedman ever spent.

The news was received with grim humour in the room upon West Twenty-ninth Street that wintry day; a humour to which the remembrance of the vanished twenty-five dollars of Dorothy's visit added a bitter zest.

"Not a cent, eh, Tappy?" Ricorton says with an attempt at nonchalance.

"Oh, they're all skins," says Ruby. "No wonder everybody quits unless they get their money every Saturday night. They'd strand you, too, if it wasn't against the law any more."

She looks on all managers as her natural enemies. There is a rather strange, little, worried look about her when she is not talking, that does not seem to be all caused by this dismal news of Sammy's, however.

"I'll get my share of what the lawyers leave, I suppose," replies Sammy quietly.

This is but natural, too, this failure of Friedman's; it is in line with his life so far, except for that brilliant youth his mother gave him, and his own fine flare of the year past. It does not depress him in the least. In fact, he does not seem to care about anything these days except his new play. He does not like to think of anything else. Somehow, all other things seem to lead to Carrie—and that is exquisite torture.

You may perhaps have noticed that the principal

characters of "Doctor Paulding" have all left their youth quite far behind. It was our Sammy safeguarding himself from attacks of despair. He pretended to himself that he had ceased to think of Carrie; occasionally that she no longer interested him; once in a while even mentioning her name, with an ill-concealed bravado, while the other occupants of the Twenty-ninth Street room turned away that they might not see the look in his eyes. It was only at long intervals, when his mind seemed to have pushed "Doctor Paulding" as far along its path as it would ever go—when he lay staring from his pillow at the black tenements rearing themselves against the gray, city-flushed sky, that he allowed himself to see the truth: he would carry the memory of her inside his heart until he died. I do not know that he ever formulated to himself the belief that people love deeply, profoundly, completely but once. I think he only realized that he himself could never love like that again. She still filled his heart so that no other could find room therein; and somehow, he knew, she always would. How useless, after all, had been his losing her!

Ricorton always knew when these thoughts came to him by the frightful energy with which he would concentrate next morning upon "Doctor Paulding." He seemed to work upon the play with an almost religious enthusiasm, then, as if he could live for that alone,—while Ricorton ceased playing those melodies of the day upon the cornet lest they should add to his misery.

Sometimes in after years, when theatre or hotel orchestras played old favourites again, the eyes of a rather tall, slender man, with gray in his once black hair, would fill, and he would devote himself more assiduously to the business in hand. It was S. Sydney Tappan. He never forgot any of the strange, little incidents of that year. It was as if he turned open for use an unusually sensitive film of his memory that winter, and the impressions remained forever clear,

distinct, undimmed, ready to be called up again on the instant by an echo from the past. The echoes were all pieces of the one melody his heart crooned in those days, though he refused to listen: the melody of loneliness and heartbreak with a high-sounding accompaniment of fine endeavour. It was only the accompaniment that kept the melody from overwhelming him at times.

It was the night after the finishing of "Doctor Paulding" that they held the celebration in our Sammy's honour. They held it after eleven at night because of Ricorton's new job in a picture show—a job secured just in time to save them all from the street. Picture shows seemed immune from the depression.

I hardly think Sammy shared, that night, in the general optimism the finishing of the play produced among the little band of Thespians. He knew in his heart that the struggle had just begun for him, whereas these people thought it had ended.

It was Pudney, the Englishman from upstairs, who came in first.

"It's a fiver I want, Tappan," he said with difficulty. "I'm flat strapped."

Sammy looked at him with a little smile of sympathy.

"Ric's the banker," he said rather grimly. "I'm broke!"

There are little circles beneath his eyes, now, and his face is a trifle thin. He is winning steadily in his fight, but it is costing him something to do it.

Pudney sits down nervously.

"You, too, eh?" he says. And after a silence: "It's the rent! By God, I hate to ask you chaps."

He has borrowed once or twice before, this Pudney, and paid back when he has sold a story or two to one of the cheaper magazines. There is a sort of freemasonry existing on West Twenty-ninth Street this winter which has enabled many of these Bohemians to survive who otherwise must have given up in despair.

"Queer chap, Ricorton," he says now. "Though a corker!"

"A real friend," says our Sammy. "You don't find them every day." When was it that he was thinking how few real friends there were from all his old life? Ric, and Carrie—— He stops suddenly—to find Pudney looking at him rather strangely.

"I say," the Englishman says, "it's no concern of mine, naturally, but——" he hesitates, "I saw the lady out with the Irishman last evening."

"Jack Bantry?" Sammy inquires. He knows the lady means Ruby.

"Yes," Pudney replies. He is rather slow in all his ways, this Englishman, with an impenetrable seriousness that always lends the impression of tragedy to whatever he has to say.

S. Sydney Tappan smiles.

"Ricotti's, I suppose?" he says. One would imagine Pudney about to disclose a murder.

"Exactly," replies Pudney heavily. "Making a cursed show of himself, too—the beggar!"

Sammy stretches.

"Well, what's the harm, Pudney?" he asks. "She gets a good time out of it while Ric is at the show. Let her!"

"The chap's after her," Pudney returns ponderously.

"Trust Ruby to look out for herself," our Sammy laughs lightly. If any one can look out for herself it is Ruby Williams, he thinks.

There is no smile on Pudney's face, however, as he rocks back and forth. Life is deadly serious to him. Has life in a rented room in New York induced the point of view, I wonder?

This scene, and these words of the stolid Englishman's are to come back to S. Sydney Tappan at one of the crucial moments of his life—to send the structure of his existence crashing to the earth. But he has no thought of it yet. He will set about the building

rather soon now, too. Fate is engaged to-night in preparing the ground.

"They're all human, Tappan," Pudney says, "these women."

"Meaning?" queries Sammy.

"All liable to error," Pudney replies. "I've seen things one wouldn't fancy as very likely—not in New York tenements either! A word to the wise, you know, Tappan. That's my advice to Ricorton."

A knock comes on the door.

"Is it Ricorton now?" he asks. His nervousness has returned as he contemplates asking again for a loan.

But it is Ruby who enters in response to our Sammy's cheerful "hello!"

"Hello, everybody!" she says gayly. "Where's the genius?"

"He isn't in yet, Sammy replies, as she makes herself at home.

She gives a little whimsical sigh.

"I suppose we can't touch a thing until he gets here, then, or he'll fly off the handle. Gosh! Nothing is any good unless *he* made it, Pudney. You should have heard him on the trip. He's the only real, good cook in the whole world, I guess—if you listen to what he says."

Pudney rises heavily.

"You won't be started yet a while," he says slowly. "I'm going for some air."

There is something in our Sammy's face that seems to touch Ruby, as Pudney goes slowly down the stairs. Perhaps it is the incongruity of his fine features against the bright colour of the cheap seed lithograph which decorates the wall. He always seems out of place to her in these rooms, somehow. For a moment the little strained look vanishes from her face, and a flood of sympathy overflows her features.

"It's not much of a celebration, Tappy, is it?" she says compassionately. Her emotions are always

quick to come to the surface. She looks around at the room's cheap furnishings.

"It's rough on you, this sort of thing. You're different, someway. I'm used to it. It comes sort of natural to show people, I guess. I wasn't born on a grand piano, anyway."

She stops—then crosses to him impulsively.

"It can't always be this way, anyhow, Tappy. We'll all be up again, some day, just as we're down now."

She feels a great pity always when she talks to this man who sits so silently at his typewriter all day.

To Sammy the whole thing does not seem quite real, as he looks around this room to-night. How is it that the boy of Hawthorne Street has ever strayed into this furnished room of cheap New York? They are two worlds, now, he sees quite distinctly—this world of cheap New York, and the Melchester society which he has left forever. He can remember when he first felt the difference: when he and Ric first took this room, and the girl giggled in the room next door, and Pudney passed them on the stairs. Why, he was only a boy, then. He feels as old as Methuselah to-night.

But Ric has come in silently, now, his eyes blazing a trifle as he stops to look at Ruby and Sammy by the window. There is a strange jealousy in his nature that will not allow this girl to look at any one else now that she has agreed at last to become his. Perhaps that is why she goes clandestinely to Ricotti's with Bantry.

Engagements seem weirdly useless in these furnished rooms, encumbrances upon the ground of reality. That is why they have made no announcement, these two. They will be married as soon as there is any money to allow of it. That is the way they phrase their engagement.

How different from that interview our Sammy had so long ago in the den upon Washington Avenue—that interview with our old friend Mr. Schroeder. Why, S. Sydney Tappan actually had ten thousand dollars

once! Once upon a time, would be more the proper way to phrase it, in order to give an adequate rendering of the feelings the reflection always induces in him now.

"Hello, Ricky," Ruby cries, running over to the musician.

But Ricorton strikes his palm upon his forehead melodramatically.

"Dried mushrooms, Tappy!" he says. "I forgot 'em! I'll start the ball rolling if you'll rush out and get 'em!"

As Sammy hurries down the stairs to the corner delicatessen, Ric deposits his bundles upon the sagging bed by the window. There is a cloud upon his face, as he takes Ruby by the arm.

"What were you doing over by the window, with Tappy, just now?" he asks sternly. There is no humour in his face. He has a strange streak of masterfulness where Ruby is concerned, a masterfulness that might be almost cruelty at times were it not for that expression in his face, an expression of kindness.

But Ruby seems strangely out of sorts to-night.

"Oh, making love to him, what do you suppose?" she flashes back.

Her very lightness seems to irritate him.

"Is there anything between you two?" he asks tensely. "Every time I come up here suddenly, there is that damn silence!"

So, beneath that easy, artistic temperament there is a fire after all! The qualities of a man cannot be gauged until one has seen him in love.

Ruby laughs easily, although there seems to be a little odd, discordant note in it.

"For goodness' sake, forget it, Ric!" she says pettishly. "Can't I talk to him?" It almost sounds like Jack Bantry in his peevish moods, she thinks. Are they all alike?

"It drives me mad to think of you with any other man, that's all," he says in a strained voice.

There can't be anything between her and Tappy, of course. He is a fool to suspect anything. The thought is enough to drive him mad. He dismisses it with an effort.

"Let's get busy," he says, kissing her. "They'll all be here soon enough now!"

Poor Ric! He has surrendered his peace of mind to this girl, along with his heart. It is just as well that Pudney has not confided his ideas in the musician. Jack Bantry might not enjoy his dinner quite as well, perhaps, if that were the case.

Let us look carefully at Ruby, however, as she sets the improvised table with the cheap cracked pottery dishes, the thick glasses, the tin knives and forks from behind the red curtain on the shelf beside the gasplate.

Something seems to be weighing on her mind: something that drags her steps, slows her movements, as she sets the table. She steals little glances at Ricorton's back where he stands, cooking at the gasplate, in her eyes a little look of fear. It is as she stands staring at the china a moment that Ricorton looks over his shoulder at her and notices her absorption.

"What's the matter?" he asks quietly.

She gives a little start as if she had roused herself with an effort.

"Oh, nothing," she says a little wearily. She sits down and traces patterns on the tablecloth. "I've been wondering if we would ever get married, that's all."

An odd look of cynicism comes into Ricorton's face at the remark. He turns out his pockets grimly.

"On that, I suppose?" he says a trifle bitterly. He does not fancy the idea of his helplessness.

She is staring at him, now, her face between her palms, her elbows on the table. He cannot remember when he has ever seen her so serious before.

"I don't care about the money," she says earnestly. "We've got to eat just the same, single or double. We're going to be married some time; what's the difference if it's now or then?"

An almost humorous look comes over the musician's face as he mutters, half to himself:

"Consequences!"

What does she think marriage usually results in?

She darts a tiny glance at him.

"Kids?"

He nods and turns again to his cooking; an odd feeling of delicacy impelling him suddenly to do so.

A tiny flush steals into her pale cheeks.

"What's the odds?" she says in her low voice. She swallows with a trace of difficulty. "Gosh, would it be any worse than this?" She throws out her arm with a little unconscious dramatic gesture that seems to include the cheap furnished room, the iron beds, the cracked mirror in the dresser, and, outside, the damp street and brick tenements.

Ricorton's jaw tightens perceptibly.

"No, by God, it wouldn't!" he says, his eyes flashing.

"But I won't always skulk here, Ruby."

"I know," she answers slowly. She looks away a second. "But we're only young—once, Ric."

He nods his head.

"I've got to pay Tappy back, a little, first," he says.

"After that, Ruby——"

She trembles a little at his words. They seem to rouse something violent in her.

"What's that got to do with it, Ricky?" she cries passionately. "I can't wait forever because of Tappy——"

She stops suddenly, aware of her vehemence, while Ricorton gazes at her in surprise.

"I didn't know you felt that way—Ruby—about it all," he says oddly. A tiny fire comes in his eyes. "We won't wait—they can all go hang—before God, they can——"

"Soon?" she says, going toward him impetuously.

The touch of her drives everything from his brain.

"Monday," he says impassionedly. And he takes her in his arms in a storm of ardour.

It was only the sound of the others on the stairs outside that saved the spaghetti from burning that evening.

It was an odd supper they had then, that supper that celebrated the finishing of "Doctor Paulding"; and not much like those brilliant affairs the biography so dearly loves to detail, those dinners of his later life. It always had a tragic side. It was the first failure the play of "Doctor Paulding" registered. Of them all only Ricorton grasped the greatness of what S. Sydney Tappan had done. It was the first of that long series of disillusionments that lay along our Sammy's new path. Had it not been for the musician there would have been a cold silence when the reading of the last act was done.

"It's well—tremendous, Tappy," he said then quietly, while the others struggled for expression that would not wound the playwright. I think he knew, somehow, that he had just listened to a vision.

In the minds of the others, however, there was a welter of doubt and disappointment that seemed to hold them dumb. It was partly because they were looking hard for fine parts for themselves, and there are no fine parts for Rubys or Bantrys in "Doctor Paulding"; partly because they failed to grasp the real drama the dialogue merely shadows and so were disappointed because the play seemed to lack so the theatric effects they were accustomed to enjoy. They were like a group of old Shakesperean tragic actors listening to a Shavian comedy in hopes of some fine effect or scene where they could rant. The climax did not seem to arrive. It was not until they saw it afterward upon the stage that they realized the genius of the thing.

It was an ironical Sammy who sat through the rest of the evening and listened to the gayety. Was this evening but a precursor of the fate of this new play of his?

It was after the others had gone that Ric told him of his approaching marriage.

Next week!

"That's fine, old man," our Sammy says, then. "She's a brick. I'm glad to hear it." He stares a little out of the window. "You might as well get what happiness you can from life."

He is thinking that there does not seem to be any great quantity to spare.

Ricorton voices his thought.

"For there's mighty little of it, anyway, eh?" he says.

"Yes," says Sammy slowly. "We should get all we can from what comes to us."

Somehow, happiness has always seemed to lie just around the corner from him. From Sylvia, too, he thinks—from most of the people he has known. Does it always stay around the corner, he wonders? Well, Ricorton will know soon now, because he is taking Fate by the beard and can test the old gentleman's abilities at dispensing happiness.

I doubt if he would be quite so certain of that, however, could he look in at Ricotti's the next evening, and peer down the narrow corridor behind Ruby and Jack Bantry as they go out at half-past ten; and she stands a moment beneath the low doorway putting on her gloves while he looks at her—in his mind a memory of the Halfway House and this girl's lips crushed to his, of Ricotti's and other kisses, of the Fontainebleau—curse it, why should she still prove so attractive now that he has had his way with her? Is it her waywardness, her fancies, her changeability? He is never quite sure how she will treat him even now: she has been as sulky as sin this evening, for instance.

"You're a funny one," he says. "What's been into you to-night?"

She stares at him irritatingly.

"Oh, forget it," she says shortly. "What's your trouble now?"

"The same," he retorts. "You!" In the half darkness she looks as alluring as he has ever seen her. What is it about her that fires him so?

"By God, you're pretty!" he says abruptly.

But she draws back from his attempted embrace, and stares at him with eyes that seem to spurt fire in the dark.

"None of that any more, Jack!" she says tensely. "I'm going to be married."

There is a fury of bitterness in her tone before which he falls back a step as if it were a physical force.

"Married?" he says, stunned.

"Yes!" she retorts in a low tone.

"What's the joke?" he asks.

"No joke," she answers sombrely. "It's true. What's it to you, anyway? You'd let me go to the devil! I know your kind."

She has stepped out into the street now, her face showing strange and white in the light from the gas lamps of lower New York.

There is an ugly look in Bantry's eyes.

"You can't kid me," he says.

"Where's the kidding?" she says fiercely.

He gives a hoarse laugh, and his voice becomes hard and metallic.

"I told you I'd fix you up if anything happened, didn't I?" he says.

"And it has," she answers, still in that low tone.

A moment of silence.

"Who are you going to marry?" he breaks out, then.

"Ric," she answers.

"I knew it," he says ill-naturedly. He looks at her a moment. "And you'd rather marry him, with a lie in your heart, than——"

"Who put the lie there?" she flashes at him.

"See here," he says in a low, tight voice. "Is this thing a frame-up or isn't it?"

"Good God," she cries. "If it only were! I'm no crook!" she breaks out passionately.

They are by a little iron fence on lower Fifth Avenue, now, and she leans against it a moment, faint.

"I didn't mean anything—but fun, flirting!" she

adds desperately. "You know I didn't—until you got after me. I must have been crazy—God, I wish I'd never seen you!"

He stares at her a moment uncertainly.

"You trust to me," he says, then, a curious look in his eyes. "I'll see you through, all right!"

He puts his hand upon her arm, but she breaks away from his grasp.

"Oh, you've lied all along," she says dully.

Of a sudden a new array of thoughts spring up in Bantry's brain.

"Are you going to tell Ric?" he demands suddenly. Perhaps after all, she is going to tell the tall musician the truth. If she does! He trembles a little, inside—Ricorton has a strange look at times—a look he does not care to speculate upon just now.

"No," says Ruby ironically. "I'll let you tell him." She laughs. "Gee, your life would be worth about one beer."

There is something horrible in her mirth.

"With your marriage thrown in," he retorts. She cannot tell the truth, he reflects with a tiny feeling of relief, unless she ruins herself also.

"What's my marriage to me, now?" she asks bitterly. "If I'd only married Ric last summer."

She is silent a moment, reviewing the events of the past year. What a fool she has been, drifting into this sea of destruction without lifting a hand to stop herself while there yet was time.

Bantry laughs a cynical little laugh as he leaves her at her door.

"Perhaps it would have been the same, married or not," he says sneeringly.

And he goes off down the street toward Eighth Avenue, leaving Ruby to climb the stairs in the dark to her room, to stare a long time into her mirror there.

Ric! What would she have done without him? Thank God for him and his kind, at least. She has learned her lesson now, for good: there will never be

another Jack Bantry in her life. She will owe that to Ric, at any rate.

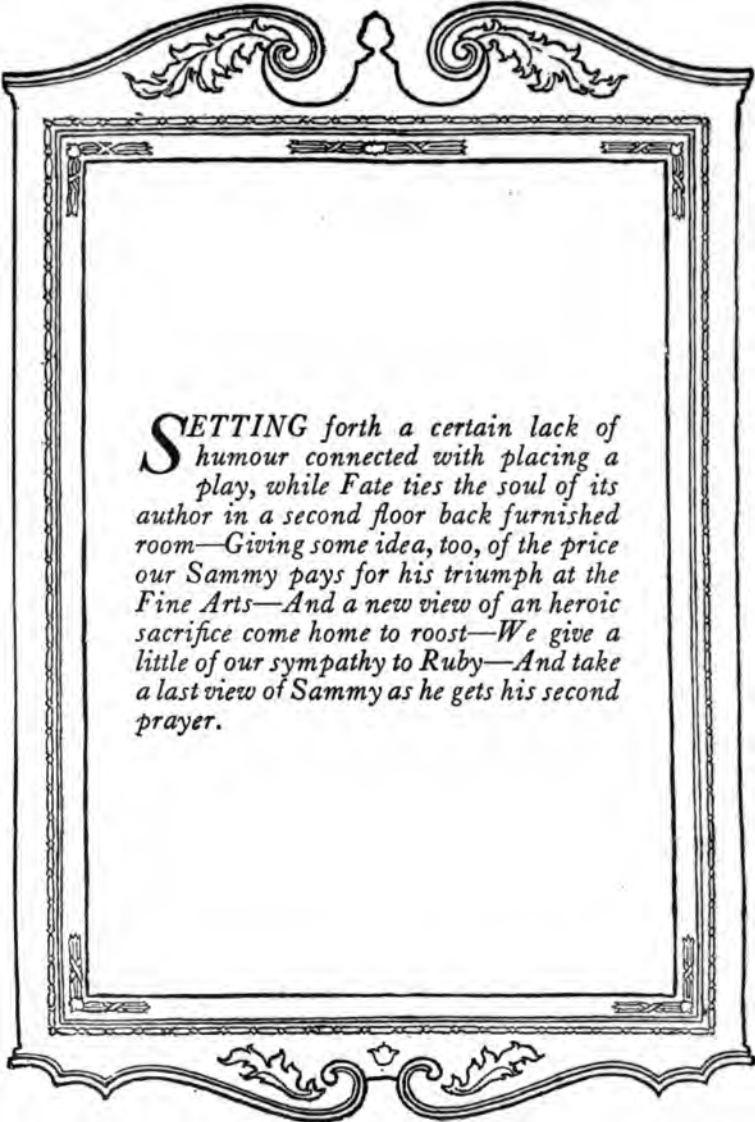
Well, one Jack Bantry was all that was required by fate in her battle with our Sammy.

For this, although Ruby does not suspect it in the least, nor any other of these roomers upon West Twenty-ninth Street—this is the beginning of fate's comedy for whose heroic rôle our Sammy is being cast. And Ruby will play opposite him.

Our Sammy!

I wonder am I left alone to thus call him, in the room on West Twenty-ninth Street, and is he Sammy to no one but me? I fear very much that his childhood and all that Melchester meant to him have faded into mist now, along with his dreams of Carrie—and only S. Sydney Tappan, playwright, is left, staring from his tenement window, thinking of Ricorton's approaching marriage, as Ruby gazes into her mirror in the next room. Sammy has vanished now, forever, into the past; and only a rather thin-faced man in a threadbare suit is left—in his face a vision of the future.

Will it always be a vision, I wonder, and nothing more?



SETTING forth a certain lack of humour connected with placing a play, while Fate ties the soul of its author in a second floor back furnished room—Giving some idea, too, of the price our Sammy pays for his triumph at the Fine Arts—And a new view of an heroic sacrifice come home to roost—We give a little of our sympathy to Ruby—And take a last view of Sammy as he gets his second prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN WHICH POVERTY WINS ITS FIRST VICTORY OVER THEM BUT IS CHEATED OF THE FRUITS OF THE TRIUMPH BY SAMMY

TO THOSE of you who have not tried placing a play, I wonder can I ever convey the despair, the despondency, the hopelessness which dogged the footsteps of our Sammy in those next weeks when he went from office to office with the manuscript of "Doctor Paulding" beneath his arm?

It was not the spirit-breaking ennui of outer offices and anterooms, where the hours drag while within mysterious things transpire—things of which no one of the downtrodden on the chairs and benches outside has any understanding; it was not this with which our Sammy had to struggle. His name relieved him of all that. It was unbelief, expressed and implied, destructive and ridiculous criticism, impossible suggestions, immovable stupidity, dull materialism, hard cynicism—walls of fanatical prejudices which no ladder save that of precedent could ever seem to scale; it was these, mixed with a fine, varied assortment of broken engagements, bankrupt promises, changed plans, assorted casts, artistic rivalries, and Thespian conceit—which presented S. Sydney Tappan with the endless prospect of permanently dark hue that he had in those days; a prospect up which he seemed to roll the impossibly shaped barrel of his genius with only the despair of hunger to aid his determination that he would push it over the rocks in the path.

It is a striking testimonial to the fine fusing of this new character of our Sammy's that each failure but

seemed to strengthen his resolve. When the famous Morgenstern suggested adding a dark-faced comedian to lighten up the tragedy of the last act, he did not even begin to lose his temper. Nor when Mason, of Charles Kirstein, Inc. thought the addition of a villain somewhere imperative, did he do more than smile faintly and spend the afternoon endeavouring to convince him that the point of the play, partially, was the real lack of personal blackness in the heart of James Osborne, the closest approach to a villain the play has.

There was no point at all to the play so far as Mason was concerned, however, so I fear S. Sydney Tappan's time was wasted. Mason could never, even afterward, endure more than two acts of the thing, although he tried manfully to sit it out in order to discover the secret of its success and copy it in two acts with a cabaret scene added. His stage managers, too, tried, one after the other, to dissect it, but without result. There was not a new trick of construction in the whole affair, and almost all the old effective ones were left out! It always remained a mystery to half professional Broadway.

It would have been laughable to our Sammy, the ludicrous difference between the manner of his reception and of his dismissal from the theatrical offices along Broadway and Forty-second Street, laughable had it not been so tragic. It is not really amusing to return to to a bleak, furnished room upon West Twenty-ninth Street, with one more of the slender threads that bind one to the hope of success severed and destroyed; in one's ears, still, the sound of sentences spelling failure and defeat, and in one's soul the raging consciousness of superiority flung down and trampled by the vulgar demon of mediocrity.

Like all artists, our Sammy had always his share of conceit; he never doubted for a single moment, for instance, that he was reading a masterpiece to those commercial gentlemen who sat in the theatrical offices off Broadway. There is a certain something, however,

which whispers hauntingly to the artistic mind when the God of Genius has touched human handiwork with the wand of His approval; and in S. Sydney Tappan's ears the whisper was always there whenever he read "Doctor Paulding."

It was why he raged so in the mean rented room, and paced its narrow length so angrily those March nights, and forgot to see the humour of his entrances and departures from the offices. It was almost invariable: he entered the victorious author of the "Lady in the Lion Skin," and emerged the defeated purveyor of "Doctor Paulding." New York did not want the work of this new Sammy.

Well, the brains which can estimate a play in manuscript are almost as rare as those which can produce the masterpiece. I do not know why S. Sydney Tappan expected such rare genius to spring up in the first room whose door opened to his knock. Even if it had, the long-continued menace of the industrial depression would probably have operated to keep "Doctor Paulding" without a producer that winter and spring. The managers were in no mood for experiments. It is easy to see why art is low when its success must travel with a dollar sign.

It was perhaps just as well that S. Sydney Tappan was so taken up during those days with his attempts to place his play, and so had little opportunity for thinking of other things. Once in a while, when Ruby would be spending the evening beside Ricorton in the picture show, he would have the room to himself, and the silence then would bring to him a little painfully the perception of how alone he would be after Ricorton's marriage. A little flush would come into his face, too, when he thought how readily he had accepted Ric's offer to delay the marriage another month so that some of the money he had spent for them all could be repaid. He has feared these evenings. They were not pleasant evenings, those ones alone; but one must be almost a fanatic to accomplish much in the world, and Sammy has

realized this at last. He will stick to "Doctor Paulding" until every producer in the country has turned it down.

I have never been quite sure that it was not unshakable belief in the child of his brain rather than true character that made S. Sydney Tappan hang so to his idea. But the test of the strong man is that he can believe in the face of a doubting world. It was not ignorance, at least, that kept Sammy from faltering. He had progressed a long way since he first went in business with the long-vanished Mr. Pike. It was, perhaps, a good thing that his character came to him a trifle belated: what a tragedy, had he believed in Pike's plumbing that way! Persistence can be carried too far.

In it all, however, there was a certain belief in the star of S. Sydney Tappan which allowed him to shut his eyes to the future, and spend each day upon the placing of the play. It could not possibly yield him money for some months after acceptance, and yet he never considered the advisability of letting it rest while he secured some position that would keep body and soul together. It is true that he knew nothing to which he could turn his hand. Even if he had, I doubt if he would have let the knowledge influence his decision. There seemed to be but the one dominant idea in his mind, and its overshadowing power drove all the others out. There would be time for positions afterward. I have heard people say since that he could get nothing to do, so peddled "Doctor Paulding." The opposite was the truth.

It would be long after midnight many nights in the room on West Twenty-ninth Street before he and Riccorton turned in.

"It's got the punch in it, Ricky, I tell you!" he would cry, pounding the table with his fist as loudly as he dared because of the other lodgers. He never seemed to lose his enthusiasm for it.

It is an odd thing, too, and one that speaks volumes for the boy to whom environment once was everything,

that through all the months of poverty he did not seem to alter a hair.

It was different with the tall musician. His glasses of ale and porter grew stronger and more numerous in the corner saloon nights, when he and Sammy and Ruby would stop on the way back from the picture show—until economy demanded and received the tin pail he used later, and carried to their rooms because of the extra expense of buying over the bar.

Nights, then, there were, after Ruby had gone to her room, and only Sammy and Ricorton remained talking until late in the night, when the musician gradually stifled his brain and mind with the heavy drink, and went to his bed with his failure and all the dull drab of his poverty-stricken existence drowned in the liquor. I do not think S. Sydney Tappan had ever the heart to blame him, however: Ricorton had no "Doctor Paulding" to urge him on to the future as had our Sammy, and the sting of his beggary and failure killed even the happiness of his approaching marriage. What could such a marriage be? At night, when Ruby had gone to her room, and there was left to Ricorton only the prospect of lying awake in his ill-shapen bed with his thoughts, I do not wonder that the sad-faced musician drugged himself into forgetfulness and quick slumber. I only wonder that all the poor do not die in drink. Perhaps such things are the reason why every corner in New York has its saloon.

To S. Sydney Tappan there seemed to be a sort of frightful emphasizing of the lesson of "Doctor Paulding" in poverty's slow murder of the genius that had flared once in Ricorton's soul back in the days of the Dutch Reformed Church—flared, alas, and gone out. The musician never mentioned, now, his opera which Vienna was to produce some day. His whole existence seemed centred upon the hatred he had for the cheap, flashy music he pounded out in his picture show; upon the tenderness with which his approaching marriage filled his still sensitive heart; and upon that odd, doglike faith

he had in the ability of Tappy—that loyalty which nothing could shake.

Nights when even the tenements were still, except for some distant quarrel and the sound of cars, he would realize his selfishness in thinking always of his own affairs, and would try clumsily to close the gaping wound in our Sammy's heart.

"You're always welcome, as long as we've got even two rooms, Tappy," he would say. "I'm just taking Ruby into our little circle, too, that's all! There's no one can ever take the place of your smiling face!"

Alas, I fear Ricorton was a good deal of a sentimentalist in those days: our Sammy's face was far from a smiling one. I wish, though, that those critics who in after years saw the weak character around his mouth could have looked in on him that winter.

There was no weakness in the face of S. Sydney Tappan as he climbed the stairs at the close of each day of failure and rebuffs, and set about washing the few dishes and utensils of their meals, while he set his teeth and laid his plans for the next day's campaign. There was in it the granite strength of purpose of the pioneer and frontiersman who pushes ever onward the fringe of civilization, winning a wilderness for a future nation. Sammy was of the new frontiersmen who are felling the tangled growth of poverty, that rank vegetation which bids fair to threaten now all the fair acres the early woodsmen cleared. He was of that ever-growing band of spirits who are translating the winning of the West into the exalted spirit of the East; that band, uncomprehended in great measure by the Mr. Schroeders of an older generation, uncomprehended by the men of the wide spaces of the plains and mountains, but working steadily and faithfully at their self-appointed task in the dark smoke-hung districts of the industrial East.

A boy, the West of our America! Vigorous, healthy, fine-minded, open-hearted! And yet a boy, nevertheless, in great part; with the problems and questions of the childhood of nations in his head.

A man, the East! With all the weaknesses and knowledge of manhood; the grave problems of adolescence, the realization of past mistakes—errors now buried beyond recall, and susceptible only of slow retrieval; but with them, too, the awakened soul of a man, flashing out from a thousand minds that new spirit of manhood, of brotherhood, which is the new spirit of America.

Yes, our Sammy was of these elect, even in his barren room in New York, as he washed the cheap dishes in the sink. He had the vision of the new spirit in his soul. Paul had set out upon the way to Athens and his mission.

It was at this time that Christy & Co. sent for him and secured his picture, done by their best photographer, for inclusion in their dramatic section with Sylvia Tremaine. A conservative magazine, our friend Christy's, and so properly some few months behind the times. Sammy was no longer able to frequent the cheapest restaurants when his picture came out just after Sylvia's. He was eating off the little black table at the foot of the iron beds.

It was then, too, that Carrie in her Settlement room on the lower East Side saw it and wept for happiness. The caption of "Lady in the Lion Skin" was over it but the look around his mouth was there, and she knew his eyes were asking for her. I am glad there was no one there to see her hand fly to her throat—except the old bed-ridden woman across the street. Even she was dimly stirred by the old thoughts the gesture evoked. So, there was love in the world, after all—it always brought the picture of a thrilling heart, that gesture! From that day, too, Carrie knew that she would seek out Sammy and see him once more. He was not married, the article said.

I do not know just when it was that Sammy first visualized the industrial depression as a monster choking out the life of mankind. He always felt dimly its

intimate relation to the beast of poverty against which he tilted in "Doctor Paulding." But perhaps it did not come to him, full-grown and a monster, until he saw the light that once was Ricorton gradually failing before the iron pitilessness of the monster's advance; saw, too, the fading colour of Ruby and the look of despair in her eyes—recognized, obscurely, the silent disappearance of Bantry without a word except perhaps a final quarrel with Ruby; said good-bye to Pudney, and stood apathetically upon the dock in Hoboken giving thanks, dully, that the heavy Englishman had made enough from a lucky story to get him steerage back to London; saw about him in the streets the evidences of the grip of hunger upon the city, in the drawn faces of the lank-haired women, the sodden men, the shrill children about the brick churchyard on Ninth Avenue beside the elevated.

God! Was this humanity as Heaven intended?

I cannot help exclaiming even now over the cleverness with which the Gods of Circumstance set the stage for our Sammy. I could almost accuse them of sending that depression and its visualization just for him, were it not that the tempest would be so out of proportion to the result achieved. While I was engaged in making accusations I think I would hold them guilty, too, of the failure of the strike in Melchester, and of the subsequent removal of John Rouse to the storm centre around the garment makers' strike off the lower East side in New York—were it not that there were so many other agitators the I. W. W. could have sent to achieve the desired effect who would have suited those Gods just as well. I have never been able to shake off entirely the idea that they were all but types, these people who took the minor parts in the drama of S. Sydney Tappan's life—typifying life, their characters and names quite immaterial to the Gods who contrived all the effects.

They were not types to Sammy, however, who knew and struggled with them. It was only the relentless

force of poverty that he felt always and forever as a type: a type of personal monster, its hand ever raised against humanity's aspirations. He saw it in the crowds, the saloons, the slums, the strikers, the stevedores, the working girls, saw it and wondered how it could have escaped his notice all those years of his life before "Doctor Paulding" came into his mind. He was always prone to see the larger side of things, however, to pass over with too cursory a glance those details that are life to most of us—the details he did see, the dramatic, the romantic things of existence—which is why his youth did not see this beast of poverty plainly before now.

Nights when he and Ruby picked their way through the greasy streets that led to the picture show where Ricorton worked, the whole squalid misery of it all seemed to strike him in the face with the force of a human blow: a blow intensified a hundredfold when he saw the pale face of the musician at the banged-out piano beneath the screen.

I suppose perhaps a third of the audiences to which Ricorton played those nights knew Carrie by sight at least, and could have told Sammy where to find her, had he known she was in New York. Trouble, however, seems to have a strange reticence which prevents it always from making itself known until there is no alternative. It is singular to consider that had S. Sydney Tappan confided his desires to those weary, ill-fed audiences they could have given him what he most desired without a moment's delay. The Settlement for which Carrie worked lay about three blocks away, and there was scarce a doorway in those tenements which had not framed her figure once at least. A poorer section, this, than the one in which Sammy is dragging out his existence. There are no furnished rooms here because every foot of space is already taken, and boarders are literally what the name implies—ladies and gentlemen with a board to sleep upon instead of to eat from as was once the case.

It killed the last vestige of hope that Carrie ever

entertained of saving the poor, when she first realized the misery and squalor that was crowded into that narrow island between the rivers. Charity and Settlements, Y. W. C. A.'s and model tenements seemed all swallowed in one gulp of the beast's great jaws. And yet she saw more plainly than ever the crying need for them all. First Aid, she always phrased it—First Aid until the doctor of Society could arrive. What a case that first city of the western continents presented to her eyes, still fresh from Melchester and its malady so unacute as yet compared to the desperate condition of this great metropolis of millions. Here was work to her hand for a lifetime!

There was a certain satisfaction to her in the thought. A life of crowded days and busy nights does not allow of too much reflection; and our Carrie is but a girl beneath the shield of her career. She has to strive hard sometimes at night, as in her Settlement room at Melchester, to forget the life she might have had with Sammy had things been different with them; to forget the dream faces of the children she has wanted so badly all her life; to forget the little ageing look of her mother as she still sits at the head of the table in the old-fashioned dining-room on Washington Avenue, and sees plainer with every day the blunder her life has been; to forget—well, her life, I fear. Her life has always been Sammy.

The teas and dinner dances and beautiful clothes of society in Melchester seldom occur to her now, except to bring back to her the scenes of her romance with Sammy. Thank Heaven, at least she was never willing to sell herself for fine clothes! That temptation has been spared her—and clothes and fine things mean less than ever to her now. It is only when she thinks of Sammy that she wishes for some of the exquisite things the windows on Fifth Avenue display. She would like to be quite beautiful, should she ever meet him again, and her father has left her to her own financial devices for some two years now.

I doubt very much, however, Carrie, if the women and children of that part of the East Side ever noticed the plainness of your clothes. You are a millionaire duchess in their hearts, just as you once dreamed of being long ago on the ballroom floor of the Washington Club, with Sammy approaching down the waxed floor to claim you for a dance. How many years ago was that? Thank Heaven for our youth, at least! Even an old melody can bring it all back to Carrie.

There has been a rising tide of anger this winter and spring on the East Side as wages are reduced, and shops and factories and workrooms close down, and the industrial depression makes good its threat of hunger. The streets are filled with muttering men and small knots of harsh-faced women and girls, in their eyes the throttling fear that comes from utter despair. They have no control over their destiny, these people, and they have seen starvation before. Before them, too, there is no vision such as Sammy has, no high spirit of the soul such as the Settlement house welcomes evenings when perhaps Tschaikowsky or Katherine Breshkovsky or any of the kindred souls of the great cause of liberty in the world sit around the fire and stir their hearers with the story of martyrdom. These starving workers on the streets, talking liberty and suffrage and revolution and dynamite in a hundred accents have no flame from God to light their way. They are simply waiting; waiting to die in their rooms, or in the river. They have reached the Promised Land of the West and it has spurned them.

It is no wonder that John Rouse made a record for additions to the I. W. W. ranks that winter. No wonder, too, that to most of them the higher justification of his creed fell on deaf ears and only the red riot of his speech, the crash of his dynamite resounded in their brains. A choice to these people so far as they can see—death or dynamite! That dynamite acquires a less formidable look under such circumstances is not surprising. People do not throw dynamite for fun; and

the humour of life is decidedly lacking this year of the depression in New York.

The muttering grew audibly louder to Sammy's ears, too, as he went to and from the picture show those damp nights of early spring; the groups seemed larger and more threatening. That there could be anything prophetic for him in it all never entered his mind, of course. It was not until the blow fell that the stage stood out vividly to him, of a sudden, and he saw the heroic rôle there waiting for him to play it. Even then had it been a rôle of circumstances alone he would never have played it. It was why the Gods fired that heroic character of his with an idea. It was the combination for which he sold his name.

He never forgot the incidents of that night in after years. They seemed seared upon his memory as with a branding iron. He could always repeat, even, all that Ricorton said, every word the driver of the taxicab uttered, hear again the low roar of the mob, the crackle of the police revolvers, and the crash of window panes as the strikers hurled their paving stones into the advancing cordon of detectives, threw wild, and demolished the store fronts behind the plain-clothes men, scattering the crowd left and right.

At the time he was conscious only of his own blind fury against the taxicab driver who could demand the price of his fare in advance while Ricorton lay upon the curbing, his face to the night sky, his head cut deep with a bloody gash from one of the paving stones. To his dying day Sammy never forgot that he and Ruby between them could muster but twenty-seven cents; and the taxicab drove off down the wet, slippery street shining yellow in the light from the street lamps, leaving Ruby on her knees in the gutter, Ricorton's head in her lap, and himself blind with rage against a world of wolves; while down the street the strikers still fought, routed now by mounted police, the shrieks of women sounding from the open windows of the tenements, and in the tiny lulls of the struggle the oaths of maddened men.

One hour it was before the ambulance men laid the musician on the sagging iron bed in the West Twenty-ninth Street room and withdrew, leaving S. Sydney Tappan and a white-faced girl beside him—a girl who stared with dilating eyes at the chalky face of the wounded man, and continually sought the surgeon's bandage with her nervous hands.

"More shock than anything," the young surgeon had said briefly.

A contusion of the brain.

Sammy's heart sank when he heard it. A diet of ale and porter and starvation are not good helps for combating death.

In Ruby's mind, at first, the hushed voice of self shrank back before the overwhelming question of Ricorton's life. Not until the first light of morning was at hand, and the musician had not recovered consciousness yet, but still lay in that heavy stupor, did it begin to seem possible to her that he could ever die while he lay so close to them in this room. It was then, as the roofs of the tenements grew gray in the dim morning light and the cold dawn filled the furnished room, showing the hollows beneath S. Sydney Tappan's eyes, and her own white, strained face looking out at her from the cracked mirror, that the spectre of her own position rose up to haunt her and strike a chill of fear in her heart: a chill that froze her brain with the realization of her certain doom should Ricorton never speak again.

How instantaneously, then, her world narrowed, as with a closing shutter, until it consisted only of Utica and her mother's mean house on the side street, and this cheap room on West Twenty-ninth Street with the gaunt form of S. Sydney Tappan beside the bed. These two her only hope!

Utica! As in a flash of the shutter she saw its doors, yes, even her mother's door closed to her then. Those women of her mother's world would understand only how best to trample her underfoot. There would be no second's rest for her in the streets of that town once

the truth were known. She could see and hear the whole thing there, now, with her child still seven months unborn.

Money! If only she had some money to figure out a way! At the thought the hopelessness of her situation rushed over her afresh. As well cry for the moon as for money upon West Twenty-ninth Street. There would be no money for her. Bantry, now—he had had money put away some place; and had vanished silently and left her helpless, in hell. There would be no money from any place now. God! If Ric should not live! In all the world there would be no soul to turn to except this hollow-eyed playwright who watched beside the bed of his friend. On Tappy would hang her fate should the tall musician never rise again from that sagging cot.

I think her solution came to her as the kindly old doctor from down the street examined Ricorton, and she lay on the bed in her hallroom and stared dully at the ceiling, listening for the words from the next room; came with little, ugly steps into her soul, with evil, twisted face and malevolent grin, and whispered to her the way out for her. I do not think she even hesitated at listening, either, unless I am very much mistaken. A woman fighting for her life, this Ruby Williams, in her back room with its stringy curtains and torn shade.

That she has struck by accident upon the one weapon that can yield her victory, she does not realize as the old doctor shakes his head and speaks.

"No hope, I fear, unless he rallies soon now," he says, blowing his nose loudly, as he looks at the still figure on the bed. Who was it blew his nose like that, Sammy wonders, dully? Oh, yes, Uncle Richard from Washington, at the Dobbs' house, when his mother died. He has never forgotten it.

The doctor hesitates at the door.

"In fact," he adds slowly, a certain pity in his eyes for the tall, thin-faced man who is holding the door courteously, "in fact, I fear—no hope at all—good-bye——"

And he has gone, with no thought of payment in his mind, leaving S. Sydney Tappan gazing in unbelief at the figure on the bed. A figure! Is it no longer Ricorton already, he thinks, with a little chill around his heart? Is Ric to leave him after all they have endured together?

In rapid succession there run through his mind the little old Dutch Reformed choir room in Melchester, and the musician sitting in the dull light from the cloudy panes; the smoking-room on the Pullman as the train flashed through the night toward New York; that first day they rented this room in which he stands; the rehearsals in Lyric Hall; the night in the City Theatre on Fourteenth Street, and Ric tapping loudly for Bantry's cue; the day at the station when he left for the Coast trip; the letters; and their reunion at the Halfway House and Sylvia's; and then the "Rose of Asia," and the disappointment they drowned at Ricotti's—

And then this depression, and the misty night wind on the cobbles where Ric lay with his head in Ruby's lap beneath the yellow street lamp. Before God, is Ric going to leave him, too, as all the rest have done?

He has forgotten Ruby entirely until she steals in and glances fearfully at the figure that breathes so heavily now upon the bed. Is it sorrow for Ricorton that seems to twist her face so?

"I wonder," she says in a whisper, "will he live?"

She has dropped on her knees beside the bed as Sammy answers. It is only for a second that he has hesitated and glanced out the window.

"I think—not," he says in a queer, dry voice which he does not recognize himself. The truth must come soon now, anyway, to the girl upon the floor. Somehow, even the cheerfulness seems to have faded from the carpet.

He never forgot afterward the single exclamation that escaped her at his remark.

"God!" she said. And in the sound there were the accents of the damned crying out to heaven for help.

"I think He must be all there is left for us," he says

unsteadily. He knows now that Ricorton will not live.

"And no marriage—now, for me," Ruby says painfully.

I have always wondered why the remark did not jar harshly upon our Sammy's consciousness. It was not quite the natural thing to say just then. I suppose, however, he was not apt to be critical when Ricorton lay dying before him.

"Don't say it, yet," he says oddly. It seems like taking even the last chance from the dying man, he thinks, and consigning him to death, this considering him as dead already.

But this is Ruby's chance, now, and she will take it; the Gods have played into her hands at last.

"I've got to say it," she says tensely, a little shudder of horror around her heart. "I've got to be married, Tappy!"

She breaks off and looks the other way, as the realization of her meaning sinks gradually into Sammy's brain, and understanding fills his eyes. He thought it humiliation, always, and not the hot hate of herself which had surged suddenly into her soul and made her turn away.

"You mean——" he begins slowly, uncertain how to phrase what he is trying to say.

But she interrupts him. She will get it over and done with, even if it spoils her chance. Only the sense of her desperate necessity is driving her on now.

"Yes," she says hoarsely, "it's happened—why wouldn't it here——"

But Sammy is thinking only of the anguish that must have been Ricorton's as he was struck down upon the street.

"Ric!" he says. In his mind there is no blame for any one. It is only in books that such things do not happen.

In Ruby there is a relief that floods her soul. He has assumed it was Ric who has ruined her, without any question!

"Don't blame him," she says in a low tone. "We're all human. I didn't know— And now—" She looks down at the form of Ricorton. "I wish it had been me they hit—"

Sammy turns away, sick. Is there no end to misery in the world?

"Don't," he says hoarsely.

"Why not?" she says desperately. Can she go on with this, she wonders? There is no choice, however, she must. "You know the world—you know what it means for me—what chance has a woman like me got—now?"

Our Sammy stares out the window.

"Something can be done," he says grimly. There is fight in him yet.

"On twenty-seven cents?" cries Ruby relentlessly.

With the words there come to Sammy again the cobbles and the night wind, the taxicab and the shouting strikers. This is what it means to be poor. Suddenly that monster of the depression rises before his vision, full grown this time, crushing a world of men beneath its horrible weight, reaching into the villages, the towns, the cities, the slums, the saloons—striking down the world of labour, of industry, of art, shop-girls, actors, clerks, stevedores, strikers. This is the monster of poverty taken active form and name and out upon its hunt for human souls, the monster against which he has sworn his oath; America his world of Pharisees, and the destruction of the monster his Parsifal, his Symphony Eroica, his Thermopylæ, his crucifixion.

No paving stone, but Poverty, has killed Ricorton in the damp streets of New York—and, unsatisfied, reaches out now for this girl, this sweetheart of his, and gloats over the weakness of humanity which aids its work of ruin!

But it shall not succeed over her, too!

"No, by God!" he cries; and to his astonishment cries it aloud.

His mind is made up now. Of what use all that fine writing in "Doctor Paulding" if its author shrinks from the test himself? Our Sammy has caught the hero's cue in this forsaken furnished room on West Twenty-ninth Street and is about to stride out upon the stage. All the setting of his life is darkened in the dull light of the room, and only the hero's place in the spotlight stands out clear and distinct. One by one, he sees now, all the people of his life have fallen away. The stage is quite empty except for these two, himself and Ruby—and the Monster waiting for its cue in the wings.

"I'll see you through, just as Ric would have," he says now. The flame is shining in his eyes. Poverty has won its last victory over them.

In Ruby there is a hatred of herself that will hardly allow her to speak.

"You mean," she says almost in a whisper, "you will marry me?" It does not seem possible she is really saved.

But Sammy, as he nods his head in assent, is not looking at her. He has put his ear to the struck man's chest and is staring now at the inanimate form of what was once Ricorton.

"He's dead," he says simply. "Perhaps God has been saving me for this!"

I do not think any one in the room would have thought it anything except an echo—but it is Ruby, by the window, who has whispered half to herself:

"God!"

It is the tone that cries aloud, it is not an echo.

CHAPTER XIX

IN WHICH BANTRY CONGRATULATES HIMSELF, AND CARRIE SEES A NEW PLAY BY S. SYDNEY TAPPAN AT THE FINE ARTS

It is an odd thing how the aspect of our actions alters when seen through the glass of Time. S. Sydney Tappan's marriage to Ruby began first to present a different face to him when he realized in the room on East Sixtieth Street—where he had moved to escape the memories West Twenty-ninth evoked—that it is not possible for us to put away at will all that our lives have been. It has only been for one brief exalted day that he could exist as the nameless, unconnected rescuer of Ruby. He is S. Sydney Tappan of Melchester again now. The strands of his life run on as before—to run on until the pattern of his career is finished. He is S. Sydney Tappan—and married.

He has had his hour of anguish, however, and conquered for all time, that evening after Ruby went back to Utica and the mean side street, upon what little there was still due from Ricorton's salary at the picture show; went back with S. Sydney Tappan's name, and in her soul a vast relief that yet seemed to fade moment by moment before a great hatred of herself. Once she was out of danger she began to see what manner of man it was who had done this for her, and all that was good in her rose up desperately and cried out for the truth. It is strange to consider that at the moment when she thought her peril was past she was but beginning her fight against that real danger which grew stronger and stronger until she could no longer resist it—her contempt for herself.

That hour of our Sammy's anguish came while he packed on West Twenty-ninth Street; when he saw himself for a brief space as he was; playing that fine part at Williams, in his letters, dazzling Mr. Schroeder with the brilliance of his success as a captain of industry, lionizing himself in the theatre at Melchester and the Schroeder drawing-room while the audience applauded wildly for Sylvia Tremaine; and selling his own happiness, now, for a final opportunity to play the rôle of the hero, a hero, too, who could never be applauded by any one except himself. It was as if he caught a glimpse of some one else—some one for whom his heart cried out—watching the rough box in the Potter's field as it hid Ricorton from his sight for the last time, picking his silent way with Ruby afterward through the wet, misty streets of New York to the office where he gave her his name and sacrificed himself with it—his great recompense her salvation.

I think he crowded a lifetime of heartache into that anguished hour alone as he packed into the round trunk he had brought from Melchester—he could remember it in the old attic on Hawthorne Street against the eaves—as he packed in it their music and threadbare clothes, and all the hundred and one things even their poverty had accumulated; packed in it, too, though his eyes refused to see, those half-torn letters of Carrie's. It was only then that his heart failed him for a moment, and he stood in the gaslight overwhelmed by despair. He pinned his soul in that brief second to the soiled manuscript of "Doctor Paulding" as it lay upon the dresser.

It never seemed to him, afterward, as if it could have been only an hour that he spent in the old furnished room. It was his mute testimony to the fierceness of the conflict he had won.

It was not until he sat through those evenings upon East Sixtieth Street, however, that he saw with a strange coldness around his heart that his test had in reality but begun; that his sacrifice must be an ever-

lasting one, a lifelong concealment of the truth, if it was to avail Ruby at all; that the realization of the hope of his life must always bear with it the bitterness of this fettering secret—a secret to last always because of the hopelessness of ever explaining it. His conception that night of Ricorton's death—the conception he had somehow had of himself as doing this thing and then ceasing to be, had lost the glamour now that made the act possible of performance even to our Sammy. Our lives live with us still, binding us inexorably to the great woof of the past. He must pay now, during his life, for the gilded sacrifice he has made that night in his fight against poverty. This secret of his and Ruby's will be always with him to build its wall between him and human intimacy. It was his one hour of self-pity.

His great consolation after it was that he had saved Ruby. The thought stood him in good stead for a long time. That in the final reckoning each of us can save only himself, he did not see for many years. It was Ruby who saw it first; and when she saw it, recognized that she had but exchanged one hell for another, with now the fuel of a second wrong added to the flames. One's conscience does not remember the conventions of society: it is the true inwardness of our actions that sticks.

It was Hartmann, oddly enough, who first told Sammy of a possible chance for "Doctor Paulding," and lent him the fifty dollars that finally saved him. S. Sydney Tappan did not notice the little look of hostility with which the actor first greeted him; a look that faded, however, as his keen vision took in the telltale shininess of the playwright's coat, and the dark hollows underneath his eyes—faded, and vanished entirely when he learned that Sammy had neither seen nor heard from Sylvia Tremaine for many months. There was always a little jealousy upon his part because of Tappan's influence with Sylvia Tremaine.

A shrewd business man, this Hartmann. He has

to everything theatrical; he, too, has learned patience since he came to New York. Good things do not come to any of us in a hurry. So he is not excited.

He is only wondering if this youngish-looking man can ever take the part of Doctor Paulding successfully, as John Cromwell comes down the old darkwood stairs and greets him in the rather formal drawing-room. His deep voice and fine inflection bespeak only the cultured actor, with no trace of a traditional English accent. There is a strange look in the eyes of this John Cromwell, however; introspective, our Sammy thinks, and yet alive with life. It is almost as if he sees and enjoys some other view over the heads of the people of this world into some Golden Gate beyond; a view the mundane dwellers on this sphere do not observe. He was one of the first of the elect whom Sammy knew. He always felt, too, as if he had always known the man before a sentence had passed between them. It might have been the contact of their kindred souls.

"I like your play," Cromwell says, as he comes in, "provided I have read it aright. Come up!"

Upstairs beside the fire, in the room of ancient design and furnishing with its plain blue rugs and armour-studded walls, that John Cromwell calls his study, the actor speaks his mind.

"You've two dramas in it, haven't you?" he asks intently. He stares into the fire. "It seemed to me as if I sensed always a second drama off stage, the real drama of forces which the action only suggests, hints at, finally brings out on the stage before our eyes in the moment your James Osborne staggers back from the mob outside the Settlement. I sense always a mounting menace off stage, and Doctor Paulding struggling with the weak weapons of his love and example to ward off the catastrophe! Quite in vain. The rest do not see until the real tragedy bursts in upon the stage. Is that it?"

Sammy nods his head. Here is a man.



“Sammy’s faith faltered as he . . . saw that vast audience stream in from the rainswept street”



"You are the first man who has sensed it," he says quietly. "The others have just seen a play."

He does not know of the strange conviction which possessed Ricorton the night of the reading upon West Twenty-ninth Street.

Cromwell smiles.

"They will understand when the footlights shine on it, Tappan! No imagination, that's the explanation. You have a play of character, a psychological play if you will, there are no coincidences, no circumstances, no claptrap to make the drama. The forces which mould the characters are inexorable. Where did you come by the thing?"

"Ibsen, partially," Sammy replies. He knows the actor means where did he come by the constructive plan. "I simply took the higher social forces where he took—say, heredity in *Ghosts*. Doctor Paulding, in that Settlement scene, might be listening to the mob in the street, as Mrs. Alving to Regina's voice from the dining-room, and say with her, '*Ghosts!*' The ghost is that of the dead past industrial wrong——"

"Poverty!" cries Cromwell. "Exactly my impression of it!"

In his mind there is a strange exultation. This man who sits before him seems to his mind to have made a play that flashes with golden gleams of higher truth glimpsed fitfully through the cloud of dull human action. It has been his purpose he sees now. He is almost a hypnotist, this Cromwell, in his notions of how a play should be staged, and it is four years since he has had anything to work with, against which he did not inwardly rebel—and this play seems made for him, at last. A Thespian with the prophet's soul is what John Cromwell is, his only fault, perhaps, a vision which can sometimes forget the hour's need in the future's necessity. He sees mankind a trifle too much in the mass, and is thinking of the larger victory while he passes the old woman on the corner whom Carrie will always see.

It is perhaps the best way to demonstrate his mind to simply record the fact that though he took "Doctor Paulding" that afternoon, he yet let its author go out the door without even the purchase price of a dinner in his worn pocket. Sammy was in the last extremity. Hartmann lent him fifty dollars; it was the fifty dollars that saved him.

It was a tribute to the changed estimate of success our Sammy had that he never even calculated in advance the possible receipts from the Fine Arts Theatre. He was conscious, of course, that John Cromwell was no sure financial success such as Sylvia Tremaine would always be. Most of these ventures in the Fine Arts do not make world record runs. And yet he never considered the money he might receive beyond the fact that he would no longer starve. In spite of her peeping through the blinds, I am not sure but what Mrs. Schroeder would still call him fool. He is not a fool, however, I will venture to say; fools do not write "Doctor Pauldings."

I wonder what she would have said had she known that John Cromwell shut himself up from all callers those summer months, denying himself to every one except those connected with the future production of the play, and spent the time with S. Sydney Tappan living Doctor Paulding's life as Sammy saw it; and later as John Cromwell saw it, even clad in the same clothes the audience saw that memorable night of the production—I wonder would she have called him fool?

Personally I have a strong suspicion that it was the reason why the character of Doctor Paulding secured the hold upon the English-speaking world it did. John Cromwell acted with his brain as well as with his body; and behind him was the brain of Sammy. Perhaps it was only when the immediate financial reward was not evident that Mrs. Schroeder called people fools. Sammy was never a fool to her after the second year of "Doctor Paulding's" run.

I think it was the blood of generations of marriage-reverencing ancestors that first made Sammy unconsciously think that Ruby should be present at that first night at the Fine Arts. But it was quickly swallowed in the perception of her loneliness once the idea occurred to him. She never knew why it was that he suddenly began to write to her faithfully twice a week. He doubled the number of letters because he had not thought of it before. It was only after it had been settled that she would come that he saw how impossible it would have been to have left her out. Ladies in Utica, even when they live upon mean side streets, do not stay quietly at home while their husbands have first-night productions at the Fine Arts Theatre in New York. It was one of the first lessons he had in the new aspect of that marriage and its secret.

Strange, queer letters they were that Ruby wrote back to him, with an odd undercurrent of despair that he could not understand until he thought, with a little curse at his stupidity, of what Ricorton must have meant to her.

She was hating Utica, too, along with herself, had he known it, in those days of spring when she looked out at the elms along the streets, and waited for the postman to bring her letters from New York. The bedraggled, rose-coloured couch in the dining-room beside the high stove seemed unbearable in the hours when dusk crept along the muddy streets and wet sidewalks; and the farmers' wagons went by on their way to the valley, and the old woman from three houses down who came in to get the dinner talked interminably through the kitchen door until the old-fashioned dark clock struck six, and her mother came in from the store. S. Sydney Tappan was sending her money then, from the advance payment John Cromwell had made him.

There must have been a sense of doom in her heart, moreover, that day she looked through the geranium-choked window of the parlour, and saw Jack Bantry

swinging down the street staring at the houses. She never knew afterward just how he discovered that she was there; whether he was just playing in Utica and remembered the address, or whether he got it from the theatrical agency in New York and got off the train to see her as he passed through. That home is the place where they must take us in when trouble overcomes us, and that this was once her home, may have been all the clue the Irishman needed.

She never forgave the garrulous old woman what she said at the door. Days afterward she remembered the first words that Bantry used before he discovered her new name; and she could never quite rid herself of the idea that possibly he had come with the intention of saving her at the last from the ruin he had brought upon her; and that the news of her new position brought back on him his ugly hatred of Ricorton and S. Sydney Tappan, and put in his mind that idea of revenge and profit which finally destroyed her.

"Oh, Mrs. Tappan?" he said, then, with an odd inflection in his voice that made Ruby in the parlour shiver. "'Faith, I'll see her.'"

I wonder was it her knowledge of the real character of the man that made her experience such a feeling of revulsion as he came to greet her in the dim parlour, or was it merely a prevision of the danger his knowledge would always hold for her? She realized afterward that she had lost her battle before it had begun. She unconsciously lowered her voice at his first words so that the old woman in the kitchen might not hear what they said, and the Irishman knew at once that she was afraid of him, from that.

"And why not Mrs. Ricorton?" he asked impudently, as he seated himself in the old rocker.

"Ric's dead," Ruby answered in a low voice.

Her tone called up the manhood that there was in Bantry and silenced him for a brief second. She must have loved the musician after all. Then the odd puzzle of the affair smote him sharply.

"So, you're married to Tappan, eh?" he said unbelievably.

"Yes," she said defiantly. After all, what business was it of this Irishman's now?

"Guff," he said flatly. "When?" He was not sure that he believed it, although in the depths of his consciousness there was something that whispered to him that it had an oddly truthful ring.

"A month ago," she answered, a slight metallic ring to her voice. There did not seem to be any sound from the old woman in the kitchen, now—was the old fool listening, as she had suspected? Hurriedly, in a panic, she searched her mind for some plausible accounting of this marriage. What a fool, when she had had all these weeks to think of some reasonable explanation which would satisfy this man before her! Why could she not have anticipated this?

"Ric was—killed—in the strike," she said slowly.

Light flooded Bantry's brain.

"Oh," he said. "And Tappan married you?" He had read of that strike in Boston where he had gone to make sure of a summer job.

"Yes," said Ruby. Somehow the whole thing seemed so plain and bald, put in the light this conversation placed it. It did not seem possible the man before her could escape the implication of those simple questions and answers. What could she add to soften the effect?

"On what?" the Irishman queried with his ironic smile. There was something strange here, something hidden. He felt it in the girl's tone of voice, in the little side glances she threw toward the kitchen door. "Is Tappan here?" he added. There was something about the tall, gaunt playwright that made him feel outclassed, cheap.

"No," Ruby replied. "He's in New York. John Cromwell has taken 'Doctor Paulding.'"

Bantry sniffed.

"Cromwell's a pompous ass," he observed sneeringly.

"He'll kill what Tappan hasn't with that stuffy dialogue."

Inside him, however, a bitter jealousy rises up for a moment. This girl, whom he has twisted around his finger until now and the despised dreamer of those cheap furnished rooms are somehow creeping ahead of him. A play at the Fine Arts and perhaps money, while he still waits for employment in the offices! Cromwell commands a certain highbrow following, so that Tappan will be sure of some money at least. And there are always apeline managers to run after a playwright of the Fine Arts. What luck that such a play should happen to strike the fancy of the would-be great Cromwell! A gullible public, too, that may swallow the whole thing, and think it fine because it is so rotten dull. What luck!

The evident slur upon S. Sydney Tappan stirs Ruby violently, much to her surprise. She has not realized before her new estimate of the man.

"You leave Tappy alone," she says, her eyes flashing. "Stick to Cromwell if you want to throw your mud."

Bantry gives a little whistle.

"Sudden affection," he says sneeringly.

"As sudden as I please," she cries hotly. "What business is it of yours?" She is angry now, and does not care what the old idiot in the kitchen may hear. There is a fire in her soul for the man who has saved her, and she rises up in his defense.

Bantry's eyes narrow in an ugly fashion as he says before she can speak:

"Who has a better right?" There is a meaning look that goes with the words which turns Ruby cold.

"That's over," she says in a low voice.

"Is it?" he says. "I'm not so sure!" He stares at her with his old bold look. He has no means of knowing the change that has taken place in her soul since he saw her last. She has always been contrary like this. Behind that cold exterior perhaps she is on fire already.

It is with a vast surprise that he sees her rise, and throw open the door.

"That's over, I said," she says in a strange, bitter voice. "I've got a husband now. Do you understand?"

He cannot dodge the implication of her action.

"You mean I'm not wanted here?" he says dangerously. There is an astonishment in his voice that he cannot conceal, an astonishment mixed with hurt vanity. He cannot believe the charms of Jack Bantry do not make him welcome anywhere.

In her eyes, now, however, there is a look that makes him uncomfortable of a sudden.

"You heard me," she retorts, her tone one of steel. "I've got a husband."

Suddenly the quick Irish temper of the man flames out. She is showing him the door! She must have forgotten with whom she is dealing.

"By God, then, where is he?" he says furiously, "I want to see him." Is this all a bluff? Or is she telling the truth? Who knows? Why should Tappan have married her? Did the fool do it to save her from disgrace—could he have been such an idiot as that? Or did this girl take him in with her passionate allurements and keep the real truth from him? The two of them must have been alone on West Twenty-ninth Street after the musician died—

"See him, perhaps, and talk over old times—old troubles—eh?" he adds insinuatingly.

With a certain wild exultation he sees that he has struck upon some kind of a mark in the way Ruby goes pale of a sudden and stares at him as if struck dumb. By God, she cannot make a monkey out of him!

"How's that?" he asks sneeringly. "A sort of West Twenty-ninth Street reunion!" He will follow up this thing, now. She has never told Tappan the real truth, he will wager his last dollar. That is the reason for those glances toward the kitchen, her low tone of voice,

and all the rest of it. She has never told any one the truth!

Surmise becomes conviction as he sees terror gradually dawn in her eyes, and her breath grow short.

"Perhaps we'll be closer friends than ever," he says mockingly. "With such things in common as we have, you and I?" His tone of voice is menacing. "Who knows? I'll see you in New York."

And he goes out the door and down the street, with eyes that still flash the conflict and his victory. He has the whiplash over this girl now, he thinks grimly, and one way or another it shall yield him something. He has heard before in New York of those fortunate people who "have something" on some one else. Well, by God, he himself has something now.

The hours our Sammy spent in the Fine Arts Theatre those weeks of the rehearsals of "Doctor Paulding" were the first happy ones he had spent since that night in Melchester when he walked past the darkened theatre and saw upon the signboard "The Lady in the Lion Skin"—a play by S. Sydney Tappan. The ideals of the Mr. Schroeders of the world have gone down in ignominious defeat now, and in Sammy's soul there is the consciousness of fine effort finely directed, the sense of accomplishment smoothing the obstacles in the pathway of his present, assuaging the sharp hurts the memory of the past gives him. Carrie would applaud him now, I am sure.

He was very conscious of his resolution not to think of her during those long days of endless, laborious toil and discussion; but in the little pauses of the work upon the stage, while he sat in the darkened auditorium and made notes, I am afraid there was very little else in his mind. The whole vast audience of the first night was resolved into the face of Carrie, not so eager now, alas, but staring at the stage to see what her old Sammy had done with his genius. All the effects were contrived for her. He was trying to put the new soul of Sammy

upon the stage so that she might know that he had changed. That she would ever again come into the fabric of his life, he never suspected. It was more as if he built a memorial to some one he had once known, to whom he would dedicate this flowering of a long-planted inspiration.

She would come, he thought; even if the run were but for two weeks she would contrive to get there nevertheless. She would never leave him forever judged and damned upon that first play of his when there was new evidence offered that might reverse the verdict. She was too fair for that, and Melchester was but a few hours away by train. Plays in the Fine Arts were always matter for conversation in Melchester. She could not help but hear and come.

He did not realize the changes, physical and intellectual, which were altering him so out of all resemblance to that youth Melchester had once known. A man now, our Sammy, with dark eyes and firm mouth, and in his bearing that spirit of kindness which gradually transformed his life; a man, these people in the cast of "Doctor Paulding" feel instinctively, with the charm of life in his soul. To Melchesterians he might seem a trifle worn, gaunt, yet made of steel, as he walks back to Seventy-second Street with John Cromwell these late summer evenings; his eyes a trifle deepset yet flashing with spirit. But it is only the scar of the conflict he has waged and won. He is a handsome boy no longer; Sammy's first youth has flown from him on West Twenty-ninth Street in the winter.

That time bore so lightly upon the charm of Carrie during the months was because of her untroubled spirit. In spite of that little look of sadness I do not think she looked an hour older than in those days in Melchester. Her task lay plain before her, and the full accomplishment of her days and nights left her little opportunity for self-scrutiny. She would have been almost happy had she ever found a way to combat the little memories of the past that sprang up in un-

expected places and cried to her of Sammy. She was glad now, at least, that she could no longer hear the swish of the trees along Washington Avenue in the night breeze of sultry August, need pass no more the Washington Theatre with its memories of a certain play given there long ago, need catch glimpses no longer of the country club across the river with its bars of light falling from the windows out athwart the links; need not pass Hawthorne Street with its ageing hedge catching the snow of December or the rain of fall, and shining before the lamps of the homecoming motors in the dusk.

There were none of these things to bring back to her the memory of the promise life had once held; and yet I think they were all there in New York, in different guises, different places, under different names. It was the sun of Melchester and her youth that set behind the Jersey hills across the misty, purple river, when she would be returning from a walk upon the drive; it was the rain dripping from the big elms along Melchester streets that she heard falling when the drops fell from the roofs upon the window-sills of Rivington Street tenements; the rippling of the river by the country club that she heard, in the lap, lap of the muddy water along the Floating Church by Henry Street; the billboards of the Washington Theatre in the bright lights of Broadway and Seventh Avenue, making her wonder always what Sammy was writing now; she could never escape the mournful music of those memories, springing up so suddenly, reminding her of all her life lacked. Almost all that her will ever accomplished was the banishment from her conscious recollection of that evening Sammy kissed her out on the cool, dark links, and the sound of the closing door behind him in the Schroeder drawing-room, the night of the production of the "Lady in the Lion Skin."

She wrote Annie once a month. But that Sammy had never answered her own last letter and that she did not hear from him any longer, Carrie never told her.

They were meant for each other was Annie's only thought, as she waited silently upon the family around the quiet table of the Schroeders' in Melchester, were meant, and so would have each other in time.

It was through one of those benefits arranged for the victims of some particularly atrocious factory fire that Carrie first heard of the John Cromwell venture at the Fine Arts; heard and thrilled. Dark days for the seekers after social justice, those days of Sammy's early career, with the accumulated forces of ignorance and prejudice, apathy and self-interest arraying themselves against every advance, even when the object might be the aid of little children in sweatshops; dark days through which ventures like that at the Fine Arts sent a beam of hope and cheer in the gray chill of the social mist, a beam that gathered to the theatre the great hearted of a metropolis in a mighty effort to say godspeed to each new champion should he prove worthy; gathered, too, along with them, the carpers and cynical critics that seem to attend every great movement of the world, their mission perhaps praiseworthy, their methods the world-old ones of the narrow-minded.

Sammy never forgot the great variegated crowd of the "Doctor Paulding" first night. A crowd that streamed along Forty-fourth Street in the rain from two directions, and poured ceaselessly into the mouth of the Fine Arts Theatre, spreading through the lobbies, the promenades, the galleries, the balconies, the boxes, the orchestra circle in a thousand odd colours and voices, a never-ending kaleidoscope of human faces and expressions, settling into the hum of humanity in the mass, once seats were found.

In the little manager's office, that famous office with the signed portraits on the walls, the small space a breathing memory of all the greatness of the stage, Sammy sat and watched them come; saw those whose faces were marred by poverty taking the side stairways that led to the galleries, the shuffle and side glances of the poor accentuated by the brightness of the lobby;

watched the gayly yet tawdrily dressed occupants of the balconies—clerks, stenographers, commuters, teachers, visitors—all imitating, unsuccessfully, the style and conscious grandeur of the motor-driven assemblage in evening dress that crowded into the boxes and orchestra circle below—painted cheeks beside ascetic-faced professors, dowagers, brokers, writers, salesmen, first nighters, publishers, débutantes, roués, buyers, society favourites, all in the pushing crowd; marked the tall men from the Southwest, in broad-brimmed hats, bringing for a brief moment the stretching plains of Texas into the heated air of the lobby; the heavy-jowled near statesmen from Nebraska and the Dakotas in their black felt hats; the hawklike ranchers from the far grassy hills of Wyoming, uncomfortable in stiff shirt and collar; the humorous-lined faces of shrewd merchants from Ohio, Illinois, Missouri; beside them ruddy-skinned neighbours from the farms of the Middle West, real Americans all these last, except where some German face from Iowa, some Scandinavian face from Minnesota proclaimed the mixture of the republic—all points of light, these faces, tipping the waves of Gothamites who surged endlessly through the open door into the velvet-hung foyer, waves sprinkled with the intellect of New England, the hot blood of the South, the moustached near-aristocrats of the smaller cities, and, beneath all, the mad hodge-podge of the representatives of the millions of New York.

I think Sammy's faith faltered for a moment as he sat in the office by the lamplight on the desk, and saw that vast audience, the unthinking face of America, stream in from the rainswept street. Could all that heterogeneous mass of humanity possess a common heart and soul, common aspirations? Was there a heart of humanity in these Americas? Or was John Cromwell amusing the Pharisees with the dream of what they might have been but now no longer cared to be, except in the comfortable, artistically lighted theatre? And he himself the purveyor of the dream?

It was only when the lights were lowered to the accompaniment of tolling bell that proclaims the approach of the first act in the Fine Arts and Sammy looked out from the curtained box where he and Ruby sat—looked out upon the illuminated faces of the seated crowd, that he realized the opportunity God had given him in his genius—his talent, calling the soul of America to listen before a thousand prosceniums.

He never forgot the hush of the voices as the curtain rose on that plain study of Doctor Paulding's which seemed like a real place in the world to him. It was the poverty of lower New York near the river that stood outside that scene in the Fine Arts and came in with Doctor Paulding, as John Cromwell entered and the drama rose, tightened a little, and then led the assemblage in the seats forward down the valley of imagination; a reality that spoke inexorably to the listeners beyond the footlights; the soul of truth beating through the lines the actors spoke.

He never forgot, either, the way in which the menace of the play rose and mounted higher and higher, until it seemed as if even he himself must rise in his box, and cry out to the blind actors on the stage, and warn them of the catastrophe impending there, before it was too late. He knew before the play was half over that he had written something great.

It seems odd, now, to consider that he did not once look at that far seat in the left balcony where an oval-faced girl sat, a look of never-failing tenderness in her eyes that somehow hushed the efforts of the two stray medical students behind her to distract her attention to them from the stage.

In Carrie's heart the little nervous dread of those first few minutes which she carried with her all her life whenever she saw one of Sammy's plays has given way to a tiny feeling of exultation, as the drama catches up the wandering threads of mind in the theatre and weaves them into the single strand which holds fast the souls of the audience to the tragedy upon the stage. Gradually,

too, the magic of the conception the actors unroll before her lays hold of her, grips her, until she is no longer conscious of the theatre, of these people around her, the great tiers of faces—is held only as by a bar of fire to the soul of Sammy bared to her gaze, flashing with the spirit of his new vision! No “Lady in the Lionskin,” this. Here, too, the same genius, the same deft skill—only turned now upon the clay of real humanity, and modelling a figure that seems to turn to breathing reality as the lines appear—the fine heart of man apparent in every lineament.

Where has Sammy learned all this?

It is as the play progresses that her heart comes into her throat with the desire she has to see him once more—this is the Sammy she has always known, except for that brief time when those chameleon spots of his shone with a different colour—this the Sammy of her idealistic youth, the Sammy of her girlhood love and young passion, the Sammy, thank God, of the rest of her life.

The acts passed almost as if without cessation before her gaze, the applause almost unheard until that final climax. No one who saw that ever forgot it. The streaming, uplifted faces of that vast assemblage stirred to the depths of their beings, and applauding wildly the worn, gaunt man whom John Cromwell and his fellow actors held on their shoulders and upraised arms. It was as if all the suffering of S. Sydney Tappan’s life leaped full grown before the thousands in the Fine Arts; and they rose as if drawn by some mighty power from their seats—rose and cheered until the gray-clad girl in the balcony rose and trembled with the effort of keeping her arms by her side and her hand from her throat.

“Sammy!” she cried, in the uproar. But I do not think any one in the theatre heard her.

The intangible feeling of the play had become suddenly real to her as she saw the lined face of S. Sydney Tappan upon the stage, saw the look in his eyes, and that firm line around his mouth—and she knew that he had changed. It was as if those trousers of his shrank

suddenly to the knees again, as they had been when she first saw him. She did not see the triumph, the success, the great ovation of the theatre—she saw only the loneliness, the misery, the adversity which could ever have made him look like that. Even in the Fine Arts those legs of his were still thin to her, and her heart cried out to him over the balcony.

I only wish she could have seen through the curtains around Sammy's box where Ruby sat as if turned to stone, her eyes fixed, through the brass rings, on an Irish face in the orchestra circle, in her hand a note which has changed her heart to ice—a note from Bantry, congratulating her—and himself—upon S. Sydney Tappan's fine success.

If only Carrie could have seen through and guessed the truth! She would have saved herself and Sammy the bitterest hour of their lives.

Well, at least S. Sydney Tappan is weighing heavily on the scales to-night. We can give him credit for that. I think that was why Carrie went home in the rain to her Settlement room, with that feeling of exultation in her heart.

He had found himself, at last!

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH CARRIE MAKES A CALL UPON SAMMY, AND RUBY REGRETS IT MOST

THAT exultation was still in her heart when she awoke next morning and lay for a moment on the plain bed, and saw again the play Sammy had written—saw it as she had seen it the night before. She had been right, after all, that day in the Settlement in Melchester so many months ago when she thanked God for Sammy. The world was not all like her father. It was with a fine lightness of heart that she rose to the tasks of the day.

For the first time then she began to suspect, unworthily, the reliability of our postal service. A letter to Melchester would assuredly have been forwarded to her here, had one ever been received at the Settlement on Hague Street. A year now since that last note of his enclosing the Martha Grossman check came to the door! He must have written this play since then. And in it surely there was no sign of the influence of Miss Tremaine. Dorothy must have been in error when she came back from her trip to New York, and reported his engagement and a new play to follow the "Lady in the Lion Skin." He would not be apt to write a play like "Doctor Paulding" with Sylvia Tremaine at his elbow. Too, if he had been engaged he would have written her about it among the first, even if it had been broken off later. Dorothy has never been too noted for her reliability.

Oddly enough it was the conviction she had that Sammy must have written her and the letter gone astray that kept her from writing to him herself, at first. She

could not put from her mind the memory of his changed face as he stood upon the stage for his speech, a smile upon his lips, in his eyes unwavering sadness. But surely he could never have been so cruel as to keep the truth from her, had trouble come to him this past year. It followed her, however, that thought of his trouble and her own aloofness; followed and distressed her in the days that elapsed after the night at the theatre, and prevented her from writing the note of thanks and gratitude she would otherwise have sent him lest it should be a coldly formal answer to his lost cry for sympathy and help. It obsessed her—the phantasm of his trouble and suffering; a phantasm made more disquieting by the lack of definite knowledge that hindered her from writing him her real thoughts; obsessed and haunted her until she called the office of the Fine Arts and inquired, with a little fast beating of her heart, for S. Sydney Tappan's address.

"Leave your name, please, and we will deliver your message," the polite youth there responds firmly over the telephone. He has had experience before with the crazy people who seem to chase these playwrights and actors of the Fine Arts. His business is to find out in advance what they want.

Carrie, in the dim hall of the house on the East Side, blushes a little.

"No message, thank you," she says, a trifle confusedly. She has not thought before of the system of bars to strangers which New York presents. Fate seems to be against her in her effort to see Sammy.

She does not think of John Cromwell for some time. When she does so, it is with little confidence that she calls the number, and waits while some one at the other end of the wire goes in search of information.

But her luck is better this time. S. Sydney Tappan has just moved, it seems.

"The Stradford," the voice informs her. "Near Broadway."

Some kind of family apartment hotel she sees in the

telephone book. "Doctor Paulding" is probably making Sammy some money and he has moved. Sammy! It is with a little thrill that she contemplates her visit to him. Letters are quite unsatisfactory—and this will be a surprise! It has always been a mere question of time before they would meet again, she sees now. They have been undergoing the test in the crucible of life and can perhaps emerge now into happiness. To-morrow, or perhaps Monday, when she has some time to herself, she will go to the Stradford and see Sammy again. She does not dare to allow herself to reflect upon that interview, either! It will be so sweet.

It was about the same time that, in another section of the city, Bantry was standing grinning cynically to himself in the doorway of the Sixtieth Street house.

They have left—the missus sick—so the landlady has told him—left directly after his own visit that afternoon a few days ago when Mr. Tappan was out; though from what precise disease the lady has been suffering, the landlady has not had time to find out. Left without leaving any address, either!

The landlady's husband is a barber, and what with his meals and the cats to be fed, and all the washing and the bells, she has no time for visiting her roomers!

There is a triumphant look in Bantry's eyes, a look not unlike the one when he strode off down the street in Utica, as he turns away this time. He is remembering this last interview on Sixtieth Street. So, she is actually afraid of him! That is why they have moved and she is sick. His threat has had its effect this time. He has made it plain. Can it be, though, that the girl is fool enough to think he is still after her, instead of after money? The conceit of 'em all! He has blown her to many a meal in the days when he was a sucker. Well, by God, she can blow him for a little! Tappan will have money now, and she can lay hands upon some as easily as not. That is all. He may need what little money he has still stowed away.

He smiles cynically to himself. A mere change of

address will not save her, he thinks; and he is quite certain now that through some queer change in the woman she will prefer giving up her last cent to letting him touch her again. What has produced the change he does not know or care—beyond the fact that it is damned lucky for him. And he can find the new address at either the Fine Arts or the Lambs' Club.

A thoroughly selfish person, our Mr. Bantry, without visible ties in the world because he has deliberately broken them so as to be better free to act as he wishes. He does not fear S. Sydney Tappan, either. Our Mr. Bantry is not a coward in that way. He has too much self-assurance for that—a self-assurance which is real and not assumed, and comes, therefore, as an aid always to his courage. He is perfectly capable of carrying this thing through without a qualm.

I think that was why, from the day Ruby saw him from the geranium-choked window of the parlour in Utica, she felt that she was doomed. He had not rested until he had ruined her before; he would never cease now until he had ruined her for good and all—unless, perhaps, she could persuade him that his advantage lay in giving up the attempt. That it might be money now, and not desire for her that urged him on did not enter her mind. The inclination of the feminine mind is not toward the minimizing of personal attraction. In this case the facts of the past supported all that Ruby cared to think. Bantry had stopped at nothing once!

It is a vulgar fact that moments of great emotion only leave us, sometimes, with weak stomachs or splitting heads or dry throats. So it was that the beginning of Ruby's realization that she had but exchanged one hell for another only caused a great nausea to rush over her as she saw Bantry descending the steps on Sixtieth Street that day. In her, too, there was a mounting sense of hopelessness, of despair that overwhelmed her physical condition and added the last touch to her hatred of herself—it came from her growing comprehension of the

fact that she herself was falling in love with Sammy, in the face of her approaching doom.

It evidenced itself to her in those days in her efforts to make herself over to please him. I think she knew instinctively that she was not a lady in his sense of the term, and wondered in her soul if that was why she apparently did not attract him in the slightest. It was why she ceased dropping her g's, and modulated her voice, and tried so hard to efface her naturally joyous disposition in an endeavour to appear quiet and refined. Poor Ruby! She was realizing then, to some extent, the sacrifice Sammy had made for her, and was seeing her own efforts now to keep him from regretting it as the very least that she could do for him in return. She was prepared to spend her life in showing gratitude. If mere desire could have made of her a lady, she would have been one on the spot. Her resolution might not have stood the test so well had it not coincided so perfectly with her own desires of course; but I must give her the credit for what she did, at least. She tried to make it up to Sammy so far as she could.

She was lying on the parlour sofa when he came back to their three Sixtieth Street rooms that afternoon of Bantry's visit, and found her in a dead faint alone.

"Just sudden," she said, later, avoiding his eyes as he questioned her about what had made her faint. "My condition, I suppose!"

At least she will not tell of Bantry's visit, and give suspicion an opening wedge in Sammy's mind. It was her first mistake of that week.

"Just after that gentleman's visit, I guess," the landlady tells him downstairs, between sweepings of the cats into the dismal backyard.

It was characteristic of S. Sydney Tappan, however, that at the time the remark did not interest him in the least. It is another instance of the strange blindness from which people suffer who live much in their minds. He was not even conscious that the sentence registered itself upon his brain along with the tragic statements of

Pudney that evening on West Twenty-ninth Street in the winter.

Upstairs, a little later, Ruby checks a "gosh" upon her lips and says quietly:

"Let's move, Tappy. It makes me think of the winter, here!"

She is clever enough to realize the sympathy her past arouses in him, and not above using it to gain her own ends. There are no fine distinctions in Ruby. It seems to her that she must escape Bantry at all costs. Perhaps it is the fever that she has had since that fainting spell, a fever that seems to come and go in gusts with the phantoms of her brain.

Sammy relieves her mind.

"We can very easily," he says gently. It seems queer at times to realize that "Doctor Paulding" is making him nearly seven hundred dollars a week, with a steadily rising demand for seats. They are being sold four weeks in advance, now! And it is not two weeks since it was put on.

"To-morrow!" she says appealingly.

It is the distaste, he thinks, that illness sometimes conceives for certain surroundings.

"I'll look," he says, "and ask Cromwell in the morning."

"I'll pack," she adds, with a little smile at the meagreness their belongings still display. The round-topped trunk has not been opened.

In the Stradford, however, where he has brought her in a taxicab the next day, her fever does not seem to diminish.

"It's not serious—partly her condition," the doctor says—he is the kindly old doctor again, still blowing his nose—"partly mental worry, I think."

He glances oddly at Sammy, who catches him at it.

"Meaning, I suppose," S. Sydney Tappan says, "that I beat her daily with an umbrella?"

The old doctor laughs; then grows grave again.

"There are worse things than beatings," he says

seriously. "Though it looks like fever hallucinations, in this case. I'll come again."

Quite fine rooms, these rooms of the Stradford apartments where S. Sydney Tappan finds himself these days with this girl whose appellation is that of wife, and for whom he has gotten a maid now. He cannot stay in himself all day, and no one can tell when another fainting spell may come upon her. How fortunate for them both that "Dr. Paulding" has succeeded!

"It's my head, I'm sure, Tappy," she says just before the doctor comes again. "Get something to make it stop aching."

The ache could not be banished, however, about the hours the mailman called and she listened intently for the maid to bring the letters upstairs. She expected a note from Bantry in almost every mail, and lived in hell between the mailman's visits and the rings on the street door down below.

In Sammy's mind there was a great pity for her that would not allow him to consider sending her again to Utica and the mean house on the side street unless she expressed the desire herself. She clung to him and all he represented of her old life like some sick animal to the human home which has housed it all its days. She never tired either of trying to find out if he really did not despise her for her mistake. She seemed to revel in the fact that she was no different in his eyes because of it. Perhaps her passionate desire to be absolved was because of the great wrong she had done him of which he was ignorant.

He always treated it as lightly as he dared.

"Of course you are the same to me," he would say. "Why not? It might happen to any one in your position. I'm not Mrs. Grundy."

It was never a light thing to her, however.

"God bless you, Tappy," she would say. "You're the only true gentleman I ever knew."

It is no wonder that she fell in love with him. It was different than the love she had felt for Ricorton. She

had always felt with the tall musician that she was upon the verge of great things. Sammy was the hero who had done them. She had a vast respect for him that nothing could ever shake. It was this realization of his quality that made of her life a martyrdom. She had sold herself to her own particular hell because she did not wish to pay for her own mistake in the beginning. It is not surprising that when she finally realized all that Sammy had paid for her, her soul could not stand beneath the crushing burden of remorse. Such feelings are not confined to the old melodramas.

Her mind, as she lay in bed, was occupied almost solely with her position and its solution. I do not know that she ever hoped to really solve it; it was only that her mind kept turning to it like to some maddening, tragic Pigs in Clover, in which her calculations were always upset by some unlooked-for rush of the pigs! It always stood out clearly to her that Bantry as well as herself would lose all by telling the truth to Sammy. He could only continue to gain so long as he could threaten. And yet she could not escape the grim fact that while he would but lose this one chance of exposing her, she would lose everything—to find herself perhaps at his mercy again if she survived; an ugly circle in which the truth meant disaster to her as well as relief.

There were times when she considered throwing herself upon Sammy's generosity and telling him the whole truth from the beginning, before Bantry should force it upon her; days when she watched anxiously to make sure for the thousandth time that he did not despise her, and so might fall in love with her yet. It was the hope that was always with her that this might happen to-morrow that made her keep putting off the reckoning from day to day—putting it off until the day came when she realized that he could never come to love her because he loved already—and had saved her just the same.

It was the day Carrie rang the bell, and Ruby

strained her ears in the bedroom off the parlour to catch the voices in the hall for the tones of Bantry's baritone.

"A lady for you, Mr. Tappan," the maid says doubtfully from the end of the long hall. "Though she won't give her name."

It is Carrie, still hugging to her breast that surprise where she stands out in the hall, her breath coming in little gasps with the excitement of seeing Sammy now so soon. I cannot bear, myself, to see her face again, as she stands there waiting, unaware of the tragedy inside. Before God, Sammy, you should never have let it come to this!

"Let her in," he says. He cannot think who it is unless it is some budding actress who wants his support, or perhaps some new solicitor with a new best thing in the world. Sammy could never bear to turn any one away unheard.

Carrie is coming down the hall now, however, behind the maid who only stands a moment to show her into the parlour and then retires, unconscious of the drama she has left in the silence of the room; a silence that Ruby in the bedroom raises on elbow to solve.

There is no sound because Sammy is seeing a ghost in the sunlight of that front apartment room—a ghost with the memory of all his past and once-cherished future written on its face.

"Carrie—Carrie!" he is saying. It is almost a whisper; as if a real sound would drive the face into thin air.

"It's I, Sammy," Carrie says tremulously. "Really me."

Grammar has left her in the exquisite happiness of seeing him again. She can give herself to him at last, in a moment. "You didn't expect to see me here, did you?"

The numbness of his brain bursts suddenly into a shooting pain of comprehension at the words. It is no face, but Carrie.

"No," he says, half choking.

She brushes her eyes with her hand and turns away with a little laugh.

"I can't help it—I couldn't stay away any longer—and I saw your play—— Oh, I'm so glad for you, Sammy!" It is the old Carrie, and the truth will come. "Aren't I silly to weep?" she adds quaintly.

In her voice pride, love, and unashamed emotion struggle for predominance, while a sharp sense of the unreality, the impossibility of it all chains Sammy like some modern Prometheus to his place beside his chair. This girl who stands before him with love in every lineament of her face, in every movement of her body, cannot be married—must be the same as on that night long ago when he left her twisting her hands upon the divan in Melchester; only weeping now, quite openly, at seeing him again.

"No, you're not silly," he says, half blindly. Good God, what else can he say?

A wave of terrible emotion sweeps over him with the desire she lights in him, a desire to take her in his arms blindly, fiercely, passionately, anyway to hold her close to him and crush out the distress in her eyes. There never has been but the one Carrie in the world for him since first his youthful passion awoke at their kiss. I wonder what those critics who called Sammy impersonal would have said could they have seen him in the front drawing-room of the apartment that afternoon!

"I can't believe I am seeing you yet," she says now, half laughing, half crying. He loves her just the same as ever, she knows now—she can see it in his eyes, his face—she does not care why he has not written to her all these months. There is a good reason. "I came down to the Settlement almost a year ago—father and I differed—they had to put me out——"

"Put you out?" Sammy says unsteadily. Who under heaven could have done such a thing to this girl before him? He cannot frame his ideas at all, somehow—all life seems concentrated in the present mo-

ment, the future only a kind of frightful nightmare to be delayed, put off.

"Yes," she answers. "I upset things with my ideas—they interfered with his giving—it was better for me to come down here. Do you see?"

She makes these little explanations as a sort of concession to good taste, the inevitable convention which precedes the overpowering reality of the moment—precedes without obscuring for an instant the one fact that they are together at last.

Beneath her lightness, however, Sammy divines the spirit which has led her to give up her home and choose the East Side of New York instead.

"You're fine, Carrie," he says huskily. Inside, he is wondering if he can ever carry this interview to a finish—she will not talk of Settlements and Mr. Schroeder for long!

"You don't know what a different feeling your play gave me—when I saw it——" she says softly. "It was so fine to know that I had you to believe in again. It is everything, Sammy."

I think it is utter hopelessness that makes our Sammy exclaim:

"Good God!" involuntarily. His grip is slipping.

"Why—haven't I?" she says quickly.

With a tiny inward crash his control vanishes.

"Yes," he says fiercely. Before God, she has!

Over Carrie there sweeps a presage of disaster. It is something in the way he has said that yes. There is a moment of absolute stillness in the room as he stops speaking, and she gazes at him unwaveringly.

"The truth, Sammy," she says quietly then. "Don't you love me now?"

It was always the truth she wanted more than anything else; and she could stand the evasion no longer. There will be no thought of blame, of reproaches if he does not care for her as he used. It will not be his fault. It will only be unhappy for her.

Sammy has stood more than he can bear now, how-

ever, and he is swept out of his control upon the tumultuous current of his emotions.

"Yes," he cries out fiercely, "every moment since I left you, Carrie—and now——"

Emotion chokes his utterance as he crosses and crushes her to him, the thrilling charm of her mounting to his brain. The youthful passion of that night by the river springs suddenly full grown at the sorcery of their contact in this drawing-room, filling their souls with deathless ecstasy. It is the fulfillment of that ravishing promise passion made to them the night he kissed her out upon the links; fulfilled now in manhood and womanhood.

Neither of them can hear the partial opening of the door that leads to Ruby's room, nor glimpse the face that quivers behind it at their words. They only know that they are in each other's arms again; not that in the bedroom hope has died forever.

It is Sammy who remembers.

"Good God!" he says sharply. What has he done?

Carrie's breath comes quickly as she draws back.

"What is it, Sammy?" she asks. "What's happened?"

Again there has swept over her that presage of coming disaster in this room—disaster in spite of the thrilling happiness of the brief past moment.

"Nothing," he says blindly. The impossibility of ever telling all that has happened has rushed over him. Ruby! He cannot sacrifice her now, and undo all that has plunged him into this hell. And yet he can tell nothing but the truth to the girl before him. He will tell her nothing else—though all his world is shattered about him.

Carrie stares about her.

"Mr. Ricorton!" she says. "Where is he?"

"Ric's dead," Sammy answers.

"Oh!" Carrie is shocked for a moment. Somehow, she has thought of the tall musician as occupying this apartment with Sammy.

But Sammy is striving for his self-possession again, now.

"He died five months ago," he says. "Died in hell, I think, the thing I've been through since I saw you—the hell of poverty—— Oh, I've changed—changed in every way——" What can he say that will sound reasonable to her, he wonders desperately? He should never have seen her, he realizes now.

"I knew it," she says quietly. "I saw it all in 'Doctor Paulding'——"

"It is why I came to you," she goes on.

But it is more than he can stand.

"Don't!" he cries in an agony. "I can't bear it—Carrie——"

"You don't want me!" she cries swiftly.

"God in Heaven, it is that I can't have you!" he sobs, almost in an insanity. "It's untellable, that's all—I am married now, married—now—I tell you—I can't have any one——"

Well, Sammy is paying for you, Ruby, this afternoon—I hope that you are listening well; hope, too, that you are seeing the look on Carrie's face as his words strike into her heart. She was stunned, as if by some blow, for a moment.

"Married!" she has said, in a little whisper. "You!" It is as if it were some foreign word of uncertain meaning whose import she has had to seek out.

To his dying day her pitiful face remained graven upon Sammy's memory, as she rose slowly and her hand flew to her throat.

"Sammy," she cried in an agony, "why didn't you tell me before!"

It was the only reproach she ever uttered. She smiled then, a tiny, pitiful smile that seemed to apologize for her presence there where she could not be wanted.

He never remembered afterward what she said, except at the door, where it seemed to him that his mind must crash into madness with the mighty effort his will called for to let her go without a word.

"If you had just told me before," she repeated then. She could seem to think of nothing else.

It was only when she had gone and the door closed behind her that Sammy lost his self-control. It made Ruby bury her face in the pillows of the bed in an agony. I think—an agony of self-reproach, that sound. It was the sound, from the hall, of S. Sydney Tappan weeping.

It was then that she realized fully what he had done for her. His sacrifice had not been all that night in Ricorton's room on West Twenty-ninth Street.

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH BANTRY TELLS THE TRUTH, AND NO ONE FINDS IT PALATABLE

IT IS a terrible thing to sit helplessly by and see events march inexorably to a dreaded conclusion. It was why Ruby could not wait in her bed for the certain day when Bantry and S. Sydney Tappan should clash, but strove with all the means at her command to avert the catastrophe which threatened. There was no hope any longer in her that happiness could ever emerge from the tangle of their lives. That had died with the closing of the door behind Carrie. Nor was there much expectation of success in her striving to postpone the grim moment of reckoning. She strove because inactivity was unbearable.

In the afternoons when S. Sydney Tappan took those long walks through the New Jersey hills with John Cromwell as his companion—walks which the actor took willingly so that the anguish of his friend might be dulled by the drug of physical weariness—it was then that she racked her mind ceaselessly for some solution to the appalling perplexity of her position. She hoped endlessly for some accident which would dispose of Bantry without her knowledge or connivance, and looked in the papers daily for it; an accident she knew, nevertheless, which would never take place. The Bantrys of life live to green old ages usually, perhaps the better to appreciate the remorse their actions bring them.

Her head seemed to ache almost continually in spite of the acetanilid with which she dosed herself after the doctor had ceased his calls. There was no illness for

which a doctor of medicine could prescribe. Her sickness was of the mind.

It was intensified, I think, a hundred fold by the grim silence of Sammy. He never mentioned to her that call of Carrie's in any way. I suppose he saw the uselessness of it; the feeling of self-reproach it would bring up in Ruby; the fresh wound her sympathy would make in his own heart; the unfairness of the burden the knowledge would lay upon her through no fault of her own. It was his own cross, and he bore it alone. Not even to John Cromwell did he confide the truth. I think he understood for the first time in those days the loneliness of the great spirits of the world. That Ruby had heard it all in her bedroom did not occur to him. She had been asleep when he went in afterward to see.

It was only when Ruby could stand the inaction no longer that she sent for Bantry with a desperate design in her mind.

He came one afternoon about an hour after S. Sydney Tappan had left to meet Cromwell at the Fort Lee ferry, came rather triumphantly, except for the cold suspicion in his eyes. She would hardly be likely to send for him if she meant to capitulate. The strain, no doubt, of uncertainty had been bearable no longer. She would be up to something to get around him.

She greeted him in the drawing-room in an attractive negligée, though her head swam with the effort of getting up. Bantry could never have guessed it from her face, however. She had spent an hour before her mirror. I think even he was surprised anew at her charm. In her heart she was wondering if she could ever stand having this man touch her again. But his conceit could never have imagined that.

She looked at him with a whimsical smile once the maid had left them and their ironical greeting was over.

"I've missed you, Jack," she said then a little tragically. She could always act. It is a hard part she has set out to play this afternoon, however.

He scoffs. This is a little thick even for his conceit.

"Yes, you have," he says unbelievably, "like the rent collector!"

"All right," she says then, shrugging her shoulders. There is only one way to arouse this Irishman. It is to agree with him. It always turns the trick.

He looks at her a moment.

"Have you missed me?" he asks then a little tensely. It is odd how the thought that he thrills her still can get his interest so instantly.

She looks at him, her eyes flashing slightly.

"Why haven't you been to see me?" she asks.

He is not deceived as yet, however.

"Because you didn't want to see me," he answers easily.

She gives a little laugh.

"Oh, I see," she says. There is a tiny implication in her tone that fires him.

"Have you missed me?" he reiterates, more tensely than before.

She looks at him ironically.

"Considered as a lover's question, Jack, isn't it a little bit late?" she asks.

He feels her evasion now, however, as she intends he shall.

"Have you?" he repeats intently.

She stares into his eyes a moment, and then looks away.

"You always had a fascination for me, Jack," she says in a low tone. To change the next instant—

"What have you been doing with yourself lately?" lightly. This tantalizing always disturbs Bantry, she knows.

He is not to be turned aside now.

"Damn!" he says. "To think you married Tappan! I'd have seen you through!" This is a safe thing to say now that there is no danger of being called upon to make good his words. The girl seems more attractive, too, than he had thought possible. She certainly gets to him. "It wasn't necessary," he adds moodily.

"No heroics, Jack." She shakes her head. She must pretend to discourage him at first. In her next words, however, there is a ring of truth. "Anyway, what's the difference?" She turns her head a trifle. "He doesn't love me——"

His suspicions rise again. Is she going to offer herself to him?

"What is this?" he inquires cynically. "A game?"

"A game!" she counters quickly. She must hurry here. "What for—you?" She laughs amusedly. "Why, I could always lead you a chase," she says smilingly. "You're an easy mark for any girl, Jack. I didn't mean anything—except—oh, what's the difference what I meant? Perhaps I'm just sick of sitting here in this apartment alone! Who knows?"

"That's a lie," he says tensely. "You meant what you said, didn't you? Didn't you?"

She turns to him passionately.

"Mean it! Of course I meant it—do you think I like this kind of a life—with my nature——" It is becoming hard for her now but she forces herself on. "He doesn't even look at me—I'm caged, that's all—caged!"

"By God, I'll smash your cage, then," he says hotly. And he steps forward toward the divan.

"Don't!" she says faintly. "Leave me alone, Jack!"

What a modulation it was that she put in her voice just then! I think he could almost feel desire beating through the words—desire for him to come on, and yet fear lest he should really touch her.

Inside, however, she is wondering if she is of the stuff that can make sacrifices. It does not seem possible that she can stand the touch of this man even long enough to go away and leave Sammy free, in spite of the fact that it is the only reparation apparently that she can make for her act.

It is a fire, nevertheless, with which she is playing this afternoon in her endeavour to make reparation—a fire of unknown strength, that of a sudden leaps up and out

beyond her control. Bantry has suddenly flamed with the nearness of her to him.

"You devil!" he says hoarsely; and the next moment has seized her in his arms and kissed her. He did not feel the shrinking of her beneath his embrace or the cold avoidance of his kisses while she sat there, motionless, for a moment.

Only for a moment, though, before she cried out in uncontrollable horror. In that moment there had come to her the vision of the impossibility of the course which she had chosen, the frozen horror of the future, a future which she could never live through; all expressed in the horrible nausea the touch of Bantry sent coldly through her, as if some reptile had touched her in the dark. She had changed, too, she realized, and what was possible before, no longer was.

"My God!" she cried out, then. "Not yet—not yet——" And she forced him back from her on the divan.

He knew at once.

"So it was a game!" he cried furiously. "A game again, to get me——"

It was wounded conceit as much as anything that put the fury in his voice. She had nearly made a fool of him, this girl!

"Not you!" she responded tensely, then. "It was to save Tappy—who cares for you! You can tell all you please if you want to—I've told him the truth first, myself!"

She has been keeping this in reserve all along, in case her nerve should fail her in her first attempt. She will try bluffing him, as she calls it.

His eyes narrow suddenly.

"Not the truth as I know it, though," he says violently. She cannot play him like this any longer.

"Yes, as you know it," she says coldly. There is not a flicker of an eyelash to betray the lie.

For a moment he is stunned. She has beaten him after all! Then a new point of view comes to him.

"All the better then, by God!" he cries triumphantly. "If that's it, he'll pay me for keeping it dark, just as well as you would have. I don't fear your Tappy! Or you, either! I've had my fun with you, I'm through!"

I think Ruby saw as in a flash that moment that she was lost indeed. Nothing now could prevent the truth from coming to S. Sydney Tappan if this Irishman went on with his threat.

He will carry it out, too, she is quite certain. There is a look of hatred in his eyes that she has never seen before. It is because he is thinking that these people in New York who "have things" upon other people squeeze until the last instant or their victims escape and they get nothing from it all. He will not make the mistake of drawing back now. If he wins it will be easy afterward, indeed. The iron hand is wanted now.

It was what lent him courage to go on: the knowledge that if he hesitated he was beaten.

"You won't find him a woman!" Ruby cries, "whom you can threaten, and browbeat."

I do not think either of them heard the opening door or footsteps in the hall until S. Sydney Tappan stood there in the doorway with John Cromwell behind him—stood listening a moment only and then stepped swiftly forward.

"What's this?" he said.

What a piercing silence that was to Ruby!

Bantry answered first, after a pause.

"Ask her," he said coolly. His sudden calm was ominous to Ruby. He was gathering himself together for the struggle, and felt her speechlessness as swordsmen feel intuitively the dangerous openings left by their opponents. If she wanted the showdown now, why, by God, she should have it! He did not notice at all the form of John Cromwell in the background, unless I am mistaken.

"I am asking you," Sammy said quietly. "What are you doing here?" There was no mistaking the menace of the tone.

"She sent for me," Bantry answered instantly.

"I didn't," Ruby cried at once. It was her first mistake that afternoon. Bantry held her note in his hand. She had thought merely to deny everything blindly, completely.

"What's that, then?" he asked grimly. He held out the note to Sammy who did not take it. I think S. Sydney Tappan knew that there was something underneath the surface of this meeting that he did not understand, and to which the note would lend no clue.

"Did you send for him?" he asked Ruby.

"Yes," she said slowly. A little gleam of hope had sprung up in her again. It was that the truth of the past might go unnoticed in the stress of the moment if the issue could be joined at once. It was why she rose so swiftly and addressed herself to Sammy.

"It's blackmail, that's why," she said tensely. "He knows!"

She pointed at Bantry. I think she was conscious of Cromwell in the background and her lips closed upon any dangerous details.

There was a sinking of Bantry's heart in that second, too. So—she had told Tappan after all!

In Sammy, however, there was no wish to act until he knew all the facts. He was not sure even then just what the Irishman knew.

"Knows what?" he asked coolly. It would come out in a moment, and our Sammy has learned patience.

"Our marriage," she answered in her strained voice. If there were no details her answer might save her; and the clash of battle was on now.

Sammy knew then, as the image of Ricorton sprang again into his mind. He turned slowly to where Bantry stood by the curtains near the divan.

"You beast!" he said clearly. "Get out!"

His voice was steady, but in his eyes there was the flash of an overpowering anger—an anger that cooled

Bantry like a dash of ice-cold spring water; yet did not daunt him. The iron hand, now! And the momentary gleam of hope which had come into Ruby's eyes as Sammy spoke, died again with his words.

"Not yet," the Irishman said hoarsely.

"Now!" our Sammy said, his tone like steel. Only Cromwell's touch upon the playwright's arm has saved Bantry thus far.

In the Irishman, however, there was the consciousness that the thing had gone as far as it could in safety.

"You listen to me, Tappan," he said swiftly. "I'm not the one who's out to do you up. The truth's all you want—the truth you haven't had—that she's trying to keep from you." He will test those assertions of Ruby's before conceding his defeat.

To Ruby the Irishman's words come as a first presage of defeat, like the sound of Blücher's men to the First Napoleon on the field of Waterloo. Fate is against her now, as against the Corsican so long ago. She hardly hears Sammy's answer in the defeat she sees coming, although the words do not seem like defeat at all.

"I don't get your insinuations, Bantry," he has said deliberately. "Is that all?"

For a moment the Irishman saw red at the remark. It was furious temper that spit out at them then.

"Do you think I'm a fool?" he sneered furiously. "Do you think I don't know why you married her? Do you think I'm blind? It's you who is the sucker, you poor fool—you and your marriage. Why, Ricorton never touched her—and she's made you think he did! I knew she'd done you up the day I saw her in Utica, and she told me he'd died. She tried to put it over on me before he was killed, and I wouldn't stand for it—that's how much he had to do with it—he was easy, too!"

"It's a lie, I tell you," Ruby cried hoarsely. She could stand it no longer.

But Sammy motioned her away.

"I'll deal with this man," he said. There was murder in his face—murder that made Ruby quail, and Cromwell tighten his grasp upon his arm.

"A lie, is it?" Bantry turned on Ruby. "And Tenth Street, and Ricotti's was a lie——"

"I never saw Ricotti's with you——" she cried.

"No, nor the Fontainebleau," he said mercilessly. He would expose the thing now. "Nor Kingslands, or Fourteenth Street. And I suppose I was the only one"—he turned to Sammy—"she tried to make me think I was the only one who had ever touched her"—he laughed, sneered—"Good God!"

It was unintentional on his part, I think, but the chance remark was Ruby's undoing. He might have said almost anything else than that sneer, and she would not have lost. But the injustice of it flooded her mind, drowning all caution, all sense of danger, all cunning, all pretense, leaving only an overwhelming sense of the shame and bitter wrong of it to her.

"You lie!" she cried out, roused to madness. "No one else ever touched me! I'm not that kind!"

She did not realize her irretrievable mistake, then, until he seized upon and drove home his advantage.

"It's true, then," he said exultantly. "By God—deny Ricotti's or the Fontainebleau or Sixtieth Street the time you tried to fix it up with me——"

"I never saw you at Ricotti's or Sixtieth Street," she cried in a wild haste to deny this thing that seemed about to crush her down into insanity.

It was as Sammy faced her, however, a new light in his dark eyes for the first time since he had come in—it was then that she lost forever. For into his mind had come as if by flashlight the remembrance of the evening when Pudney had told him of Ricotti's and the Irishman, of Ric's strange silence about it all upon the cobblestones of the East Side before he swooned forever; of the barber's wife upon Sixtieth Street as she swept out the cats; focussing now upon this admission dragged from her by the Irishman for whom she had

sent in some last effort to keep the secret from him
from him, who had.

He saw black a second before he opened his lips again.

"So—it wasn't—Ric?" he asked.

"No," she said in a low tone.

She did not look at him.

It was the greatest height S. Sydney Tappan ever achieved in the history of his character, then. His hands clenched slowly until a thin trickle of blood showed on the edge of his palms. But his voice did not even seem to change as he spoke after that silence.

"Why?" he asked. It was but the one word; but there was not a person in the room who did not understand the question our Sammy was asking in that unwavering voice. God in Heaven, why had she chosen to ruin him!

Yet he would not pass judgment until he understood. It was the realization of the stuff of which he was made that compelled Ruby to look at him.

"It was that or death for me——" she cried passionately. "Have you forgotten West Twenty-ninth Street? I'm not bad. He took advantage of me—what chance had I? I didn't know it would ever come to this—and you offered—offered——"

Her voice trailed off into silence as she realized the pitiful weakness of her words, these miserably inadequate excuses. How different it all seemed in this apartment in the sunlight than it had on West Twenty-ninth Street with Ricorton lying dead upon his cot in the dull light.

"I didn't realize then, Tappy. Oh, I tried to make you offer—I didn't believe there was a man who'd do it—I didn't know then—I didn't see, as I see now——"

In Sammy's mind, however, there is only the picture of Carrie as she turned away from the door in the hall saying, blindly, "Why didn't you tell me before?"

"Good God," he says, "why didn't you tell me the truth when the need for deception was past?"

It almost seems as if he could forgive her anything except the moment when Carrie stood before him in this same room.

"I couldn't," Ruby says desperately. "Couldn't, I tell you—I didn't know about—Melchester"—it is the first time she has intimated that she knows of Carrie—"I knew you didn't think of me—we're not the same kind—oh, I know that—but that doesn't stop people from loving—why wouldn't I fall in love with you after what you'd done—I tried to change myself, my looks, my voice, tried to be a lady—oh, I know I'm not one. Why, I didn't know what real love was the night Ric died. Didn't understand what I was doing to you. I was only saving myself, saving myself, don't you see! It was when I realized it all—that I tried to make it up to you—hoped you might never know it—don't you see, Tappy—God, don't you see?"

She was incoherent in her desire to show him her pitiful justification. I think she knew all along that she had done the unpardonable to him, however; knew, too, that there never could be any real forgiveness for her. Indeed, I wonder is there for any one? The past is but character in bronze; the future character in flux. Will the elements change? Forgiveness usually is sentiment. I am glad for Sammy that his mind was as if annihilated during those moments when Bantry walked from the room muttering, "I guess that's all!" beneath his breath, in his soul a great cold fear of God; glad that he had no words except a hardly audible "I see," that meant nothing to him at all—he would never see; glad, too, that Cromwell went silently out leaving his scribbled card for supper on Seventy-second Street behind on the table; leaving Sammy still standing there, staring at the bedroom door behind which Ruby had vanished like a cur of the streets, the despair of the forsaken of God in her heart.

He never knew how long he stood there, afterward.

He was conscious only of the maid coming in response to Ruby's ring and taking out a letter to the mail box; conscious of the passage of time, of the silence in Ruby's room; of the noise in the street; of the afternoon paper beside him with its ironical headlines of "depression lifting"—

Depression lifting!

Depression lifting. . . . How vaguely his mind seemed to work—employment and food now for the poor, the poverty stricken of whom he himself has been one so short a while ago; he and Ric, and the girl behind the door, and that Irishman who has left, he sees now; all beneath that Monster's claws so short a while ago—though—why, yes, Ric is dead now—the Monster killed him.

Slowly there rose before S. Sydney Tappan, then, in the gray twilight of the apartment the dark vision of the Monster, seeking out the weaknesses of its victims' characters, preying with hideous cleverness on the frailty of humanity, while all around it throws the deadly acid of its dull material weight, shutting off poor human vision from man's goal; dragging down from pitiful heights the Ricortons of the earth, with their lack of resistant fibre, the Rubys of the world with their passion, yes, even the S. Sydney Tappans with their mock heroic strain!

As in a dream he saw plainly his plight, traceable directly from that never-conquered desire of his to play always the hero's rôle, his curse his ability to fall in love with an idea, the idea of the hero. He saw it all quite plainly then—saw, and even in his agony cast off his weakness forever. That hero of his will be his slave hereafter, not his master. The Monster has won over him, too, because of his weakness.

It was a long time before he became aware of the long-continued stillness in Ruby's room; a stillness that seemed to oppress him as if a sinister something might dominate it.

He rose then, standing a moment by the door before he opened it.

She lay upon the bed, her mouth showing quite blue in the half light of the room. Even before he saw the empty bottle of acetanelid upon the dresser he knew that she was dead.

CHAPTER XXII

IN WHICH SAMMY MAKES A PRAYER FOR THE SECOND TIME—AND GETS IT

THE world moves after all, though whether in a circle or not it is for philosophers to determine.

Mr. Schroeder, for instance, was never conscious that there had been any movement of the moral boundaries until he found himself left periodically behind still metaphorically engaged in burning witches in a modern woman suffrage New England. That he could be left behind, however, is proof that movements actually took place. To him each move was always the last. One more, and the country could not be saved. He always viewed the new horizon as Columbus' mariners might be expected to have done; the falling-off place at last! A Christian gentleman, Mr. Schroeder, but born fifty years too late.

It was why he viewed with such suspicion, such alarm the entrance of Christianity into the industrial world under the name of the awakening of the social conscience, during those years of Sammy's career. It had never occurred to him before that Christianity could ever put on its hat and coat for any purpose except that daily walk from the church to the home and back again. When it walked into the industrial world somehow he did not recognize it. He saw instead a stranger, an impractical one, whose faults were vaguely familiar, but who, it was plain, would never do in business.

Perhaps it was because his wife was a Schroeder only by the grace of marriage that she was capable of a change. By far the greatest number of her prejudices had been contracted at the altar. It was her naturally

headstrong nature that led her on then to spend the major portion of her existence calling the objects of those prejudices fools, only to discover in the end that they were not fools at all.

It took her a year after Carrie had gone to New York, and she herself had begun peeping through the blinds, to see that her daughter was not really crazy after all. It was characteristic of her, too, that upon the discovery she promptly forgot all that she had said till then, and applauded Carrie as splendidly as she had pointed out her insanity before.

Perhaps there was in it, also, a touch of triumph over her spouse. He had always been a fool, and would remain so forever, if he persisted in his old attitude toward his daughter. He was the only one she always remained certain of to the end. Mr. Schroeder could never change.

And yet it might have been merely that the motive which animated his wife in her new attitude to Carrie could never have appealed to Mr. Schroeder. Most of our good Mrs. Schroeder's change came because she sensed dimly the first beginnings of high society's altered point of view toward the proletariat. In time, she saw of a sudden, this point of view of her daughter's might land them all among the inner circle of the socially elect around which they seemed to merely hover so far, in spite of the distance which they had climbed. A queer, roundabout way, perhaps, but sensible if successful in the end; an expression of charitable work actually of some use and benefit to everybody!

It was why she subscribed so generously to the Hague Street Settlement, when Mrs. Dobbs came to ask her if Carolyn would take over the direction of the plant upon the resignation of Mrs. Lewis; subscribed and avoided deftly the question of Mr. Schroeder's ideas upon the subject. She had decided to relieve her husband of his charitable work, she said. The decision had come almost instantaneously to her as the little gray lady who led Melchester society now sat in the Schroeder drawing-

room. It had been induced by pictures of dinners where Carrie would sit beside Asa, make little speeches to visiting bishops in the exclusive libraries of Melchester's best homes, perhaps hold meetings of the upper circle in the Schroeder drawing-room. Of course Carrie could accept! It was at that moment that Mr. Schroeder lost control over his own charitable gifts.

He gave in sulkily, without a struggle. He could always recognize the signs of the weather, and never strove to do anything except prepare for the change. His retirement from the active direction of the store the month before had seemed to take the edge from his fighting blood, too, even where his wife was not concerned. I think he had begun to feel old.

He said nothing when his wife announced at the table that she herself was going to New York and would carry the Settlement's offer to Carrie. It was his silence that gave the two offspring the cue to applaud weakly the good luck of their sister. They had thought Carrie done for forever. Dull rebellion filled their souls at the thought of her return. She always knew so thoroughly what she thought. The idea of what the Settlement might mean to the poor and Carrie did not enter their heads. It was the social opportunity of which they thought. They knew their sister's gift. She was going to outdistance them after all.

Nothing could have been farther from our Carrie's thoughts, however, than the social race in far-off Melchester as she sat in the plainly furnished sitting-room of the Settlement upon the East Side that day, and read a letter the postman had just brought her; a strange, jerky, disconnected letter which only seemed to add to the ghastly pain in her heart with its signature at the end. Ruby Tappan!

She put it down with all the old horror of that moment in the apartment in her soul anew, deepening the circles under her eyes, accentuating the paleness of her cheeks. This woman—she could not bring herself to call her wife—had heard it all then in the bedroom the

day of her call on Sammy! Had heard, and did not hesitate now to declare her intention of leaving him. What else could these sentences about getting out of the way mean? It fascinated her, that letter. There was not about it, somehow, the air of anger, of rage the letter of an awakened jealous woman should have. Between the words, the sentences, there seemed to lurk a sense of indefinable tragedy, of hopelessness, of fear and sadness that caught Carrie by the throat and set her to reading again and again the queer, broken phrasing. How had it happened that Sammy had never— And what did she mean by “her fault from the beginning?” Her “you would always want each other, and I can’t stand between?” Her “I did not think he would do it?” And the “he will tell you?”

A queer, mad jumble it seemed to her, like the fever ravings of some of the poor dying in the tenements, hopeless, and strangely without rancour.

A week now, too, since she had found herself in the street outside the Stradford, leaning against the post of the awning while the passersby stared curiously at her. A week, and this woman had known it all this time and had not written until now. What had Sammy said, she wondered? She had not been able since to put from her memory that shadow of unreason in Sammy’s eyes as he closed the door behind her. Had he been ill?

Into her mind there sprang again all the doubts, the tormenting bewilderments, the unbearable perplexities of the past week. Why had he done it? She was too honest with herself to pretend that she had been deceived. She could feel even yet the sudden ecstasy of the moment when he had held her in his arms and their lips had joined. No need for pretense after that. He loved her still, she knew. It was with a touch of dismay that she admitted to herself that, she, too still loved him as before. I am afraid she knew that she would always love him, no matter what he did, and the knowledge frightened her. That he was married seemed

to make no difference, somehow. Was love always like this? It was only when she realized how she would feel should she ever see him again that she recognized the power her inherited morality had over her. I do not think she would even have stopped to speak to him, so great would her fear have been that her self-control might desert her.

It is odd to think now that that morning paper which she felt it such a waste of time to read could have explained most of the mystery of the note to her without a moment's delay; and it lay on the sitting-room table still folded.

It was spread wide open on the breakfast table in an apartment on Thirty-fourth Street at that same hour, however, before a charming person in brown, with bronze hair and fine complexion. The small headline had arrested the eye of Sylvia Tremaine before she had yet tasted her first breakfast in New York, after an absence of many months. S. Sydney Tappan's wife! It was with a strange mixture of feelings that she read the paragraph to quell the instant suspicion that it might possibly be her Sammy to whom this thing had come. Still, he could not have married Carrie yet, she was certain—he would not have dared without letting her know. Dear old Tappy!

It was the details of the Fine Arts that first struck into her heart, however, and told her it was indeed Sammy. He had sent her a telegram the night of the production of "Doctor Paulding" and she had wired the theatre instantly. I think it was pure sympathy that turned her so pale with sudden pity for him then, and made her leave the breakfast there untouched while she ran down the stairs and got into a passing taxicab bareheaded.

"The Stradford," she said. If it were so—good God, how Tappy would need her!

The scene that met her eyes as she brushed past the maid into the drawing-room stayed with her always. She knew Cromwell by the window, and nodded to him.

It was the dark-eyed gaunt man in the chair at whom she stared and stared until she had reconstructed from his changed looks the Sydney she had known and come to help. Good heavens, was this S. Sydney Tappan? I do not suppose either of the men noticed even her moment's hesitation. The instant that she knew Sammy was really S. Sydney Tappan she knew that the paper had told the truth.

"My God, Sydney," she said, "how did it happen?" And she fell on her knees beside his chair. I think Cromwell changed the estimate of a lifetime as Sylvia Tremaine looked at Sammy.

Sammy told her then, in slow, broken sentences, from the beginning; while that look of infinite pity deepened in her eyes, as he told her of Ricorton's death and she realized gradually the pitiful high tragedy of it all, the useless struggle against fate.

It was only when she grasped first Ruby's identity that she cried out.

"But Carrie!" she cried then; and knew from Sammy's eyes that she should have kept silent.

There came in her mind, too, when he had finished, a feeling of shame. She was thinking of the warning she had given Sammy about Ruby that night in the Thirty-fourth Street apartment, comparing her light judgment with the heroism of the girl's final exit. There was in her mind, as there had been in Ruby's, no sense of any moral weakness in the deed which had thus removed the girl from the scene of action when no other way seemed open. Suicide is not a crime to people who have not been brought up to consider it such. To Sylvia as to Ruby it appeared simply as a matter of courage. There had been no ties which the dead actress considered she was in duty bound to consider. There had been nothing in her mind except the thought that Sammy had saved her, and she must pay now for the reckoning he had staved off for her at the expense of his happiness.

I think all three of those people in the apartment that

morning felt the pitiful tragedy of the dead actress. She had been so far from being a bad person after all. It is a tribute, too, to our Sammy's character that it was not the injury she had done him that stuck in his mind: it was the comprehension he had so plainly of how she had come to do it.

It was Sylvia who attended to everything for Sammy in the next days, even to the news items for the Utica papers, with their six lines of overdose of headache medicine to cover the grim facts.

Even Mrs. Williams, as she sat by the stove in her black silk and listened to old Doctor Carter—who had baptised Ruby—deliver the sermon, had no suspicion of the real facts. Her daughter had been a stranger to her for many years. She felt little grief beyond that of the moment. Of all the theatrical world which Ruby had once known only S. Sydney Tappan and Cromwell with Sylvia Tremaine attended the Sunday funeral. The Uticans from the side streets where Ruby had played as a child came in slight wonderment and curiosity, principally, I think, to gape at S. Sydney Tappan and his companions. Ruby had been dead so far as they were concerned for many years. It was too bad. The Utica papers gave the names of Sammy's two plays. That was all. They gave his residence as New York. Melchester was not even mentioned.

It was Sylvia, too, who roused Sammy to Carrie's right to the truth. His mind seemed overwhelmed by the tragic events of those weeks. There was a sense of the indecency of his seeking happiness so close upon the heels of this human catastrophe, also that seemed to cry out for delay.

He would have written her then, had not Sylvia laughed the idea to scorn.

"You may be a good playwright, Tappy," she said, "but you can't condense a year of hell into a page of letter paper. You'll go!"

It was partly because he saw how that devil of a hero had been tying his tongue on the afternoon of Carrie's

visit, that he put off his visit. He had let her go that day without a word! Surely he could have trusted her with the secret. And yet, somehow, it had seemed impossible to ever tell it all then, impossible to explain the odd combination of environment and character which had led him to sacrifice himself. He saw plainer and plainer in those afternoons when he turned it all over in his mind that all prophets have part of the truth; saw, too, that for every character the crucible of life turns out ennobled, a dozen emerge ruined whether the fire be that of adversity or success—all moral disaster an endless combination of human character and its man-made Monster, Environment.

It was only when his mind grew clearer that he saw the great selfishness of his action to Carrie, and listened to Sylvia's upbraidings. It was her constant endeavour to keep him from dwelling upon the events of the days just past; for with him there always was the shadow of a tiny remorse, bothering him continually. It was the thought that if he had acted differently perhaps Ruby might never have been driven to her final desperate end. It was many years before it ceased to bother him at all.

"Such an unbelievable fool as you are, Sydney," Sylvia would say, "to think of such a thing. And then, too, to think that I had all that money, and you didn't let me know!"

It always brought two little spots of red into his cheeks, the mention of her help. She knew then each time that she had gotten his mind off himself enough for him to be angry.

"Let's not discuss it," he would say stiffly while she mimicked him. "You always were a brick to me, Sylvia—but I didn't want your money—it would have been just temporary, too——"

But he could not remain stiff for long.

"You're not angry with me now, are you, Sydney?" she would ask gravely, while she clasped her hands melodramatically.

"With you!" he would retort. His tone of voice, always, was the best reward she could have gotten. It was not possible to remain angry with her.

She had the satisfaction soon of knowing that at least he did not look any longer like the S. Sydney Tappan she had stared at in the chair in the apartment that day. But it was not until he had gotten back his normal appearance, that she realized how frightfully he had looked before. Beyond a little whimsical despair in her heart, too, I do not think she suffered very much the day he went to the Settlement in search of Carrie, and she gave him up forever. She had had her fight before and won.

Carrie in the Settlement sitting-room wondered who the lady with the beautiful quality of voice could be who called her on the telephone and asked if she would be in that morning. It was Sylvia in the Thirty-fourth Street apartment, alone now by her fire, and suddenly grown apprehensive lest Sammy should have gone to the Settlement only to find Carrie flown. She did not wish to say good-bye again. There was the making of a heroine in Sylvia though she would have laughed the idea to scorn.

It was one of the shocks of Sammy's life that morning when he saw suddenly again the dirty street where Ricorton had been struck down, and realized how close it had all been to where Carrie was in her Settlement room.

The filth and squalor of the place filled him anew then with a sense of the inexorableness of the Monster while he and the ones like him talked and prated and wrote plays for the Fine Arts. It came partly from that sense of futility which comes to every one who has achieved when they place their tiny handiwork against the vast space yet to be filled. He saw himself as no stepping-stone upon the pathway of the future then but as a tiny piece of some mosaic filling up a chink in the floor. It was characteristic of him, however, that as he entered the Settlement hall he was laying out, in his mind, undismayed, the first dim framework of a new play to sur-

pass "Doctor Paulding" as it, in turn, had surpassed the "Lady in the Lion Skin" in its weight upon the scales. His vision seemed suddenly stronger than ever, brought perhaps to new life by the sight of the Settlement structures of brick, multiplied endlessly by his imagination in the cities of America, the spirit that inhabits their walls striving ceaselessly in this new promised land of the new world for the balance of society.

He saw suddenly the uselessness of throwing himself upon the scales unless his weight should remain there forever, growing always greater with the passage of time. Well, he has but started now. He will be always a new voice in the wilderness crying for the Open Mind of humanity! An Open Mind! Without which the balance can never equalize, with which all changes can be distributed evenly forever! An Open Mind—before which ignorance, prejudice, apathy cannot stand! And to which names shall not make appeal, but the spirit behind all names shall always make entreaty!

An Open Mind. It is his vision, his resolve, as he disappears within the brick doorway. Never afterward in his life did Sammy see a Settlement house set in the squalor of the tenements that he did not feel suddenly like some exiled traveller from Palestine come suddenly in an alien garden upon the Cedars of Lebanon. A touch of home! The Cedars of Lebanon in the garden of the Monster.

The oval-faced girl with the clear gaze who stood by the fireplace knew instantly why he had come. He would explain now. Sammy never realized until long afterward the briefness of his explanation that day.

"I came to tell you, Carrie," he said, while she nodded by the fireplace and her hand crept to her throat. She could not trust herself to speak. Why had he added the pain of this explanation?

Sammy could never withstand that gesture, however.

"I'm free," he said with difficulty. It was as if they were boy and girl together. "And I want you!"

She never knew afterward why she did not question

him at all, did not ask for any details, did not doubt the truth of what he said. She did not say anything at all. She nodded.

I do not think he saw that her eyes were filled with tears as he took her in his arms. He was praying that this time it would be forever. It was his second prayer. Carrie was thinking of his first, so many years ago on Washington Avenue, in Melchester. He got them both. . . .

Well, my hatred for that biography has faded just a little now. I can see better why they always thought Sammy was a hero from the beginning. I could forgive them a great deal, too, for the fine way they have put in all of Sammy's later plays and left the "Lady in the Lion Skin" such light mention. You will search in vain, I fear, however, for the names of the Schroeders. Carrie's name is there. The line reads:

"Married Carolyn Schroeder, June 19—.

A childhood friend, it says! His second wife!
. . . That is all.

He has never lost his vision, S. Sydney Tappan. I think he sees sometimes now, when he sits by the fire in Melchester, that mere plays will never bring on the millennium. But he has paved the way for the men of action at least and will still hold that torch of his aloft for them to work by! It is his consolation. It is his great regret that the mould of his own career has set and hardened so that he can never join them himself. The elect! They are always welcome in Melchester along with Cromwell and Sylvia. Sometimes I wonder, too, if the ghosts of Ricorton and Ruby do not warm themselves by the fire there? Well, they are welcome, also, doubly welcome.

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